

RAZZORCAKE

NON-PROFIT PUNK ROCK

ISSUE #100

WE DO OUR PART

WITH

MIKE WATT

PLUS

ERICA FREAS

CROM

ONE PUNK'S GUIDE
TO PYNCHON NOVELS



IN
WATT
WE TRUST



\$4



PHOTO: DAN MONICK
DESIGN: ERIC BASKASKAS



**SONNY VINCENT &
SPITE EP/7"**

Ex - Testors, Sex
Pistols, Damned,
Stooges, greatest
super group ever!



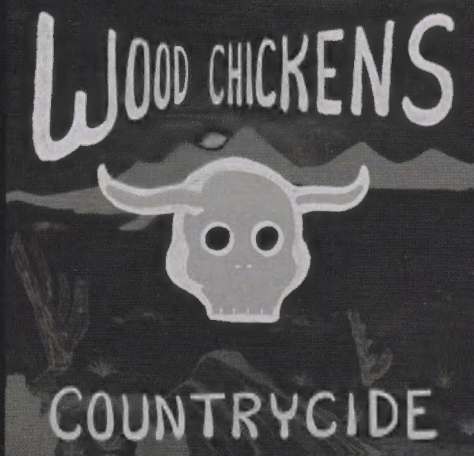
**SEGER LIBERATION
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and crew are back
with an LP's worth of
Seger System
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THE HUSSY
I See Just Fine EP
- The Hussy's first record
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Hussy from the Hussy,
stoned, garage, fuzzed
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Tom Potter (Dirtbombs, Bantam Rooster,
SLA) teams up with Aaron and Traci
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the Dirtys!



HEAVY LIDS
Bleed Me EP
- Scum, Sci Fi, Punk
from New Orleans

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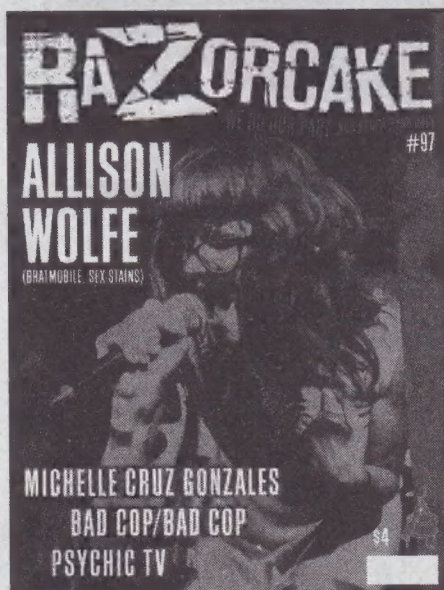
Football - Split LP

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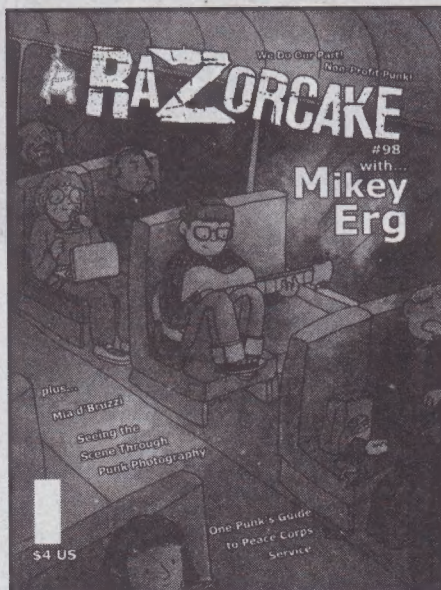
WHO WE
ARE

RAZORCAKE is a magazine dedicated to DIY punk, independent culture, and amplifying unheard voices. As a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, we're sustained by subscriptions, donations, advertisements, and grants. We want to create something that people can be proud to be a part of. We feel when we work together, life is a little more bearable.

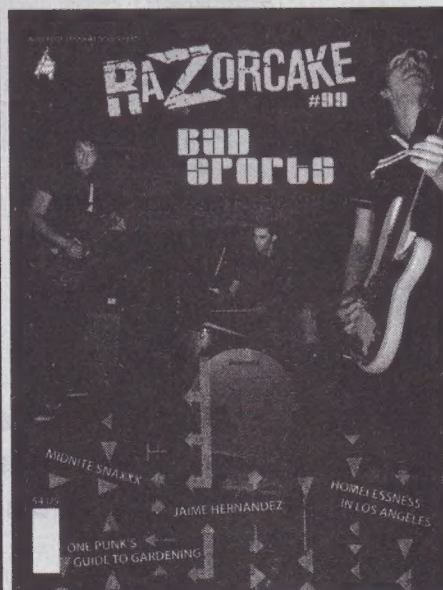
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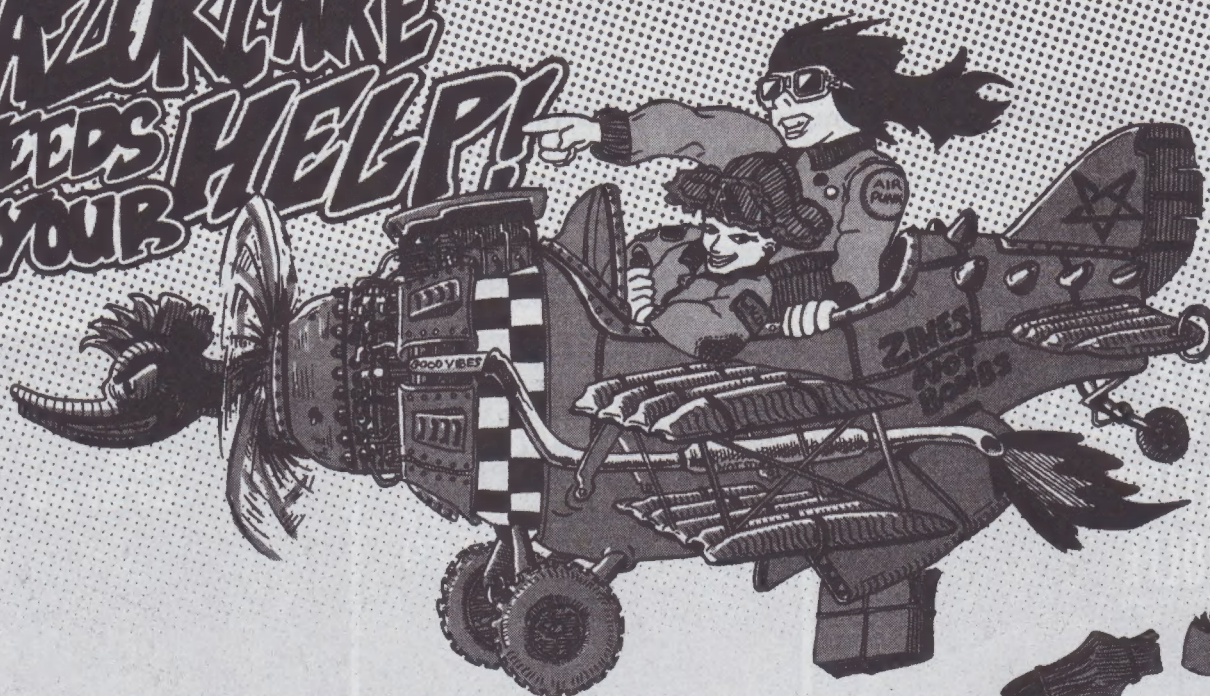
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RAZORCAKE NEEDS HELP! YOUR



We currently find ourselves at a crossroads where quality independent publishing is more important than ever, yet distribution is at an all time low.

Consumer confidence is verging on consumer cockiness, yet independent zines and labels are shutting down left and right due to lack of support.

We know there are people out there who would totally appreciate *Razorcake* but don't know it exists. There are also spaces (such as: bars, community centers, music venues, record stores, book stores, breweries, roller derby, recording studios, punk houses, tattoo and pizza parlors, any independent enterprise) that would be interested in receiving copies to give out to their customers.

LET'S CLOSE THE GAP!

HERE'S WHERE WE NEED PEOPLE TO COME IN:

Sponsor a space and cover the cost of us printing/shipping magazines to be given away for free. A \$150 donation will sponsor a space to receive 25 copies of every issue for an entire year. This \$150 donation is tax-deductible.

If you would like to sponsor a space or get a bundle of 25 copies that you give out to whomever you wish, we'll send them directly to you. But even if you don't know of a space or getting 25 copies of an issue is too much for you to give away, we'll find it on our end, then tell you who we're sending them to. If you know anyone who this might apply to—hit them up and promote *Razorcake* to them.

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ILLUSTRATION BY
SHANE MILNER, GRIDTOWN.CO

Betty White Sugar Skulls

Razorcake remains a personal tether for what's important to me culturally. When I was a kid discovering punk in the '80s, I was in both a literal and figurative desert. I first read about punk in the library. I discovered punk in stages: my first visit to a punk record store (The Underground, Las Vegas), my first punk record (JFA's *Blatant Localism* EP), listening to punk on community radio ("The Rock Avenue" on KUNV), my first punk show (Don't remember the bands. It was in a self-storage facility and the cinderblock was sweating), the first friends I made through punk, and the first time I was called a poseur. This process took years to develop. I still cherish it, over thirty years later. (Someone in a passing car yelled "child molesters!" to a group of friends as we were on the street a couple weeks ago. I am unsure what prompted the comment because we were looking at dogs in a convertible.)

Razorcake isn't ruled by a cult of personality. I unplug from drama. I'm not a partier. I've never been in a band. I like reading books and zines and listening to records in equal measure. I like being left alone and not being the center of any sort of attention.

I'm in a privileged position in many ways. By luck, determination, and others' generosity and support, making zines has been my day job for the past twenty-two years. We've passed up personal acclaim and "branding" opportunities for *Razorcake* and instead focus on being the sounding board for the stories of people meaningful to current DIY punk (like Mike Watt, Erica Freas, and Crom). We've got a system in place to ensure both high quality control and an open submissions policy. We remain firmly underground, un beholden to others about what we can or can't print. We've walked the walk for one hundred issues.

One hundred is a significant number. *Razorcake* now stands with only a handful of zines—in the history of zines—to reach this number. Our survival was severely tested earlier this year, but we persevered

because we changed the very practice of how we self-distribute nationwide. To me, one hundred issues feels like a culmination of two disparate things: *The Golden Girls* (we're old, but young-at-heart, self-empowered, rad, and sassy) and *Dia de Los Muertos* (the best holiday and celebration of the year. I want to ride a skeleton horse into the sky when I die).

I've had many heart-to-hearts with close friends over the past year. My buddy Kevin Dunn gave me some great advice when I explained I fully expected *Razorcake* to be shunned by the mainstream—because fuck them—but was more than a little hurt *Razorcake* was also largely ignored by academics, bands we'd covered who had gained a fair amount of fame, and the zine history gatekeepers. He didn't say anything for a bit as we walked up into the mist during a hike. We stopped at a decommissioned radio tower which had an atrocious sticker with artwork combining beer bottles and a scrotum. "I'm a bit surprised. Don't take this the wrong way, Todd. You've made it clear you don't want a seat at their table. What did you expect?"

It was a hard pill to swallow. It's an even harder balancing act, shunning the spotlight but wanting to eek out just enough attention in hopes of changing others' perceptions of *Razorcake* and, more importantly, the community whose history we aim to document. It took awhile for Kevin's observation to fully take root.

I'm proud of what *Razorcake*'s making now, how *Razorcake* remembers and regards itself, how it treats people it comes in contact with. I'm proud of *Razorcake*, mostly because of the people who create it with me. That's what continues to matter the most.

I can't claim to say this was all planned out from the start. At the same time, I'm not surprised. We work hard. We forge ahead. Here's to making it to one hundred.

—Todd Taylor

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dmonick.com

"Culture attracts the worst impulses of the moneyed. It has no honor, it begs to be suburbanized and corrupted."

—Thomas Pynchon *Bleeding Edge*

THANK YOU: One hundred dollar bills aren't econo, but the artist, his boat, and a high and mighty sea definitely are thanks to Eric Baskauskas and Dan Monick for the Mike Watt cover layout and photo; Zines not bombs thanks to Shane Milner for the "Razorcake Needs Your Help!" illo.; You made the Gross Palace pretty fancy thanks to Bone Dust for Donna's illo.; Somehow, I thought the mouth mists would be exclamation points instead of commas with their backs to one another thanks to Bill Pinkel for Jim's illo.; This Poly Styrene tattoo for all my friends thanks to Alex Barrett for Nerb's illo.; Floppy disc, "laugh all you want, fuckers, it was the mid-'90s" thanks to Marcos Siraf for Dale's illo.; El Face Del Cucui thanks to Roque Torres for the Puro Pincho Poetry illo.; Soup ain't dumb thanks to William Douglas Frank for the Rhythm Chicken's parade photo; Super Socolo is like Capri Sun? Melted Otter Pops? Gatorade marketed to Canadian kids? Thanks to Steve Thueson for Nardwuar's illo.; Past-future Metropolis heated toilet paper karaoke roll Venus on a Halfshell thanks to Simon Sotelo for J.V.'s illo.; Challenging, redemptive, exhaustive, expansive, life-altering literature that is worth the struggle thanks to Sean Carswell and Brad Beshaw for the One Punk's Guide to Pynchon Novels words and illos; "We might as well have a good time while we're working for societal change" thanks to Griffin Wynne, Jackie Wilding, K Tran, Molly Fischer, Rebecca Suen, Tara Jayne, and Dylan Davis for the Erica Freas interview, photos, and layout; Hats off to a person who admires a beautiful, functional photocopier mid-thought spilling about zines thanks to Mike Faloon, Dan Monick, Shanty Cheryl, El Diablo, Robert Ibarra, Craig Ibarra, and Eric Baskauskas for the Mike Watt interview, photo, and layout; Go Raiders thanks to Nicolas Montoya, Albert Licano, Robert OldHCDude, and Jesse Zeroxed for the Crom interview, photos, and layout.

"Nine songs that range from silly to sexy, like a possessed leather cat suit."
—Candace Hansen, *Electric Street Queens*, Queen Sized LP. Thanks to 100's rotation of zines, books, and music reviewers: Kayla Groat, Candace Hansen, Sal Go, Ryan Nichols, Billups Allen, Theresa W, Cynthia Pinedo, Bryan Static, Jackie Rusted, Ty Stranglehold, Mark Twistworthy, Sean Aronas, Sal Lucci, Chris Terry, Matt Werts, Art Ettinger, Indiana Laub, Lyle, Mike Frame, Kurt Morris, Michael T. Fournier, Keith Rosson, Juan Espinosa, Ian Wise, Paul J. Comeau, Rich Cocksedge, Garrett Barnwell, Nerb, Cheyenne Neckmonster, Steve Adamyk, Lord Kveldulfr, Sean Koeponick, Aphid Peewit, Camylle Reynolds, Matt Seward, Chad Williams, Tim Brooks, Jimmy Alvarado, Jim Woster, Jim Joyce, Tricia Ramos, and Craven Rock.

DIY punk can't be fully captured, understood, or expressed by men. If you're a woman, womyn, girl, grrrl, transgender/agender/non-binary/genderqueer writer who's knowledgeable about punk, punctual, and open to editorial processes, drop us a line about doing reviews, interviews, articles, or webcolumns for *Razorcake*. Diversity will only make us a better punk publication. Please help us out. (razorcake.org/contact)



Dogs chilling in a convertible

photo by
Jennifer Federico

STUICIDE FROM PUKE SPIT & GUTS SAYS GRAB THESE OR

EAT HOT LEAD



STUICIDE

DRUMS, BACKGROUND VOCAL



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SPIT &
GUTS**

"Eat Hot Lead"
1980 LP Reish!



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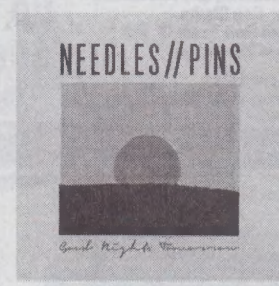
**KILL SOME
TIME**

Dark/Light - Kill Some Time LP

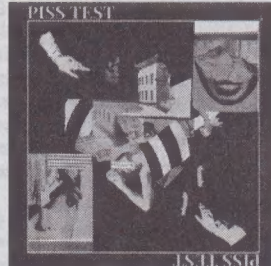
Dreary punk/psych from PDX
Members of The Triggers. The
Chemicals, Sleepwalkers Rip,
etc.



**The Chincees
S/T LP**



**Needles//Pins
Goodnight, Tomorrow LP**



**Piss Test
LP II**



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RAZORCAKE

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104 Zine *Slingshot represents the way revolutionaries should be but rarely are.*
109 Book *Nørb spins the everyday into gold. A triumph.*

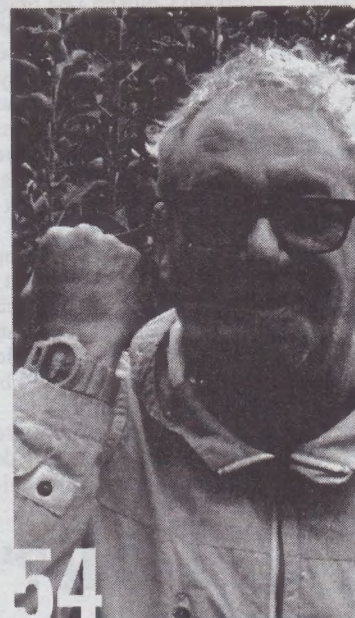
The following folks stepped forward to help us do our part over the past two months. Without their help, Razorcake wouldn't be what it is.

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Individual opinions expressed within are not necessarily those of Razorcake/Gorsky Press, Inc.

Razorcake is bi-monthly. Yearly subscriptions (six issues) are \$17.00 econo rate or \$23.00 first class mail. Plus you get some free gooch. These prices are only valid for people who live in the U.S. and are not in prison. Issues and subs are more for everyone else (because we have to pay more in postage). Visit razorcake.org for a price. Prisoners may receive free single issues of Razorcake via Prison Lit. Project, c/o Bound Together Books, 1369 Haight St., SF, CA 94117.

This issue is dedicated to the memory of Namella J. Kim.



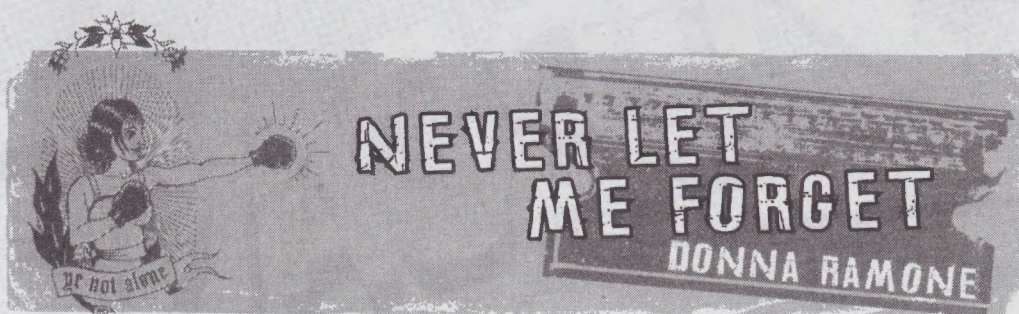
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**I love snack
exploration
because
it's fun.**

The Gross Palace

Ever wonder what idiot is purchasing those limited edition god-awful Oreo flavors? Out there is an intensely disgusting individual who willingly spends money and then consumes candy corn flavored Oreos. That same person months later happily says, "yes" to a pack of watermelon flavored cookies. For the love of all that's holy, Peeps-flavored Oreos exist because some sick human is buying them.

That idiot is me, motherfuckers.

I am that intensely disgusting sick individual; I have no shame. I ate, and dare I say, enjoyed the living shit out of those Peeps Oreos. White Chocolate Peppermint Christmas edition Pringles*? That was me. Chicken and Waffles Lays chips*? Don't mind if I do. Pitch Black Mt. Dew? A goddamned delight (and I purchased that one only because the Creature from the Black Lagoon was on the display trying to sell it).

There isn't any excuse for my behavior. The usual look of disgust I receive is generally met with my playful shrug as I joyfully consume some weird flavor of soda that contains thirty-six grams of sugar and yet somehow the entire bottle feels like it only weighs twenty-five grams. Watching me eat something strange for the hundredth time, Razorcake contributor, and tiki bar enthusiast, Joe Dana said, "She's in her gross palace," and the name stuck.

to see if it's worth the price. When buying seasonings or a bag of rice from the Indian market, I will often pick up a bag of mint potato sticks. Ketchup chips, green tea Kit Kats*, Starbursts from the U.K. (they have different flavors and no gelatin, it's cuckoo bananas)—I'm a big fan of all of it. Though they're over a year old, I refuse to let go of my last bag of these chips I bought in Bahrain. They're little starch puffs shaped like drumsticks, which I bought close to ten bags of because they were called, and I swear to you I am not making this up, "Potato Chicken Leg Shape."

"Isn't some of it terrible?" Yes, of course some of it is terrifically awful. That's part of the joy. I don't want pumpkin spice marshmallows again, but now I know they're not as delicious as my brain made them out to be. Mint chocolate coconut milk wasn't as chocolaty as I would have wanted, but I wouldn't kick it out of bed. I have no idea what I was thinking with caramel apple soda, though. Actually, I do know what I was thinking—I was thinking the zombie face with an eye hanging out of its socket on the can was cool as all hell. Halloween inevitably makes my stomach and bank account cry, but I regret nothing.

Be it odd flavors, rad packaging or both, the reason why I do this is because it's undeniably enjoyable. I love snack

then murder animals—c'mon, no one finds that aspect great).

My best guess is my personality is to blame. I'm a risk taker, adventure seeker, and all-around dumb-dumb. At some point I desperately wanted to be a National Geographic explorer when I grew up, but that might have been because I wanted to escape my family forever. Regardless, I love trying anything new, clearly knowing there's a chance a new thing might be a mistake. This means I do some unbelievably foolish stuff because it seems like it might lead to something interesting. Like every time I've broken into (usually) abandoned buildings, or every time I tried swimming to the horizon when hanging out in the Pacific Ocean, or every time I walked nine miles with the hopes of buying a pack of the new waffles and syrup flavored Oreos.

I actually stopped drinking because of this trait. With inhibitions lowered, my risk taking hit the kind of highs any logical thinking would have prevented. It was no longer harmless instances of buying batshit flavors of junk food. Then I was darting across busy roads or fighting people much bigger than I am in bars. Looking back sober, it's always so obvious I wasn't going to be able to crush that beer can with my head, yet I kept trying. Lousy, lying alcohol.

"Isn't some of it terrible?" Yes, of course some of it is terrifically awful. That's part of the joy.

It isn't just brand-name seasonal foods though. The other day, I fried up fake bacon and put it on some chocolate cake. I regularly toss in spices like cinnamon when making burritos. Since learning how to make popcorn at home (thanks Jennifer and Todd!) there is no end to what I will attempt to put on it—my current idea involves a ramen seasoning packet.

It's become so much a part of me to eat strange and terrible junk food that friends send me the their latest online findings, or bring me home the weirdest food item from their trips abroad. Sometimes, I will search for foreign junk food on Amazon

exploration because it's fun. Are these foods potentially delectable? The vast majority of the time, they totally are. Stuff that's super gross rarely makes it to shelves. And it's clearly going to be good since they're usually all just different flavors of oily sugar lumps. Oil and sugar are the top of my food pyramid. The entire rest of that pyramid is all that healthy vegetable and bread shit I eat the vast majority of the time. I'm not a complete idiot; I know diabetes exists. I'm vegan now because I ended up with high cholesterol at twenty-five and heart disease killed my grandma (and also because it's fucked up to torture

Occasionally people worry it's not just my personality, though. My co-worker was only half-joking when he asked if I had ADHD the other day. Obviously, it's not the first time. I looked over an online checklist of symptoms and I definitely rank high on, like, a solid sixty percent of them. The issue with having conditions like ADHD however is that they impair your life. I don't think I'm impaired. I can still operate a car safely and use kitchen utensils without worry. I just get really excited and eat gimmick foods every time I see a new one. Also, the internet is not a doctor, I'm amazing at any job I've held, and my



BONE DUST

apartment is profoundly fucking clean (so will you please take your shoes off before entering. Jesus, we're not animals).

If you're an optimistic weenie like me, those inedible foods are never a mistake; they're an experience. We only get this one life, why not fill it with ill-advised meal decisions or afternoons spent risking a tetanus shot? I'm not saying anyone should hurt themselves, I'm just saying we could all stand to have a little more fun in our daily lives. Eat some candy you don't know how to pronounce. Be stupid once in a while. Sure, being a responsible adult is generally dull and uninspiring, but it's not like doing fun shit is suddenly illegal after

age thirty. Trust me, eating bizarre junk food is definitely fun. Especially when you can convince a friend to get involved. Then just spend the evening discussing it at length, like some really under-educated food critics at a wine tasting. "This Oreo has distinct hints of palm oil and a long-lasting mouth feel. Also, there's Pop Rocks pieces in it, which would explain why they were labeled 'Fireworks'."

Now if you don't mind, I'm going to eat plenty of healthy food the vast majority of the time, exercise regularly, and occasionally give Nabisco another three of my hard-earned dollars because, goddamn it, Swedish Fish Oreos could be absolutely

amazing for all we know, and I am going to be the one who finds out.

—Donna Ramone

* These foods were consumed prior to my conversion to veganism. They contain milk dust, and in one case, milk and chicken dust. All United States-produced Oreos, no matter the flavor, are miraculously vegan. For an ever-expanding list of junk foods that are vegan, write me at donna.ramone@gmail.com. Welcome to the Gross Palace.



RAZORWINE 07



LAZY MICK

JIM RULAND

I nearly shit
my pants.

Resting the Curse

What a campy werewolf movie can teach us about madness.

What does it mean to be scared?

Fear is a kind of early warning system that triggers a physiological response to a perceived threat. It's our mind's way of preparing the body for action. Sounds reasonable, but is it really true?

When I think back on the times in my life when I was most afraid, sometimes this explanation applies, other times it doesn't.

When I was a paperboy for the *Washington Post*, I remember one dark morning when I tripped on the bottom step that led to a small screened-in porch. I caught myself at the last minute and came just inches away from crashing into that porch. But on the other side of that screen was a monster that blasted me in the face with a roar so ferocious I fled in mortal terror. I didn't scream. I didn't make a sound. I ran in a kind of blind panic that propelled me at top speed. The kind of flight you see in movies because in my haste to get away I knocked over my cart and scattered the newspapers all over the driveway. I didn't stop running until I was at least a block away.

It only took a few minutes to figure out it wasn't a monster on that porch but a dog, a German Shepherd, who was simply doing its job. I'd never been so close to a dog that big and mean before, face to face with just a few inches between us, and when it unleashed its bark, it did something to me.

If I didn't cry, I at least whimpered as I pulled myself together and tried to make sense of the terror the monster/dog had caused. The fright gave way to anger at the dog, annoyance at the mess I'd made of my papers, and shame I'd been so scared; for a few seconds I was completely out of my mind with fear.

What happens when we watch scary movies? How is what happens when we trigger the fight or flight mechanism but don't act on it any different than when we are forced into those situations against our will?

We don't let kids watch scary movies because the difference is negligible and the results can be traumatic. It's why horror movies often mix camp, slapstick, and corny humor into the story so our brains can let our bodies know it can stand down and regroup for a few moments until the next fright.

One of the scariest movies from my childhood was also one of the most confusing. I saw *American Werewolf in London* when it came out in 1981. I was thirteen years old and was regularly sneaking into movies. My friend Steve Mack and I would buy a ticket to a PG-rated movie and then slip into a theater for an R-rated flick. As a Catholic school kid raised in a military household in the suburbs, this was as transgressive as all get out.

My adrenalin was pumping before I even arrived at the theater. When I sat down in my seat I was feeling the double thrill of having broken the rules and getting ready to see something I wasn't supposed to see.

John Landis made *American Werewolf in London* on the heels of *Animal House* and *Blues Brothers*, both of which were big successes. He'd written the screenplay over a decade earlier while working in Eastern Europe where he witnessed a funeral in which a man was buried feet first so he could not return from the underworld.

American Werewolf in London starts out as a buddy comedy: David and Jack, two young Americans on a backpacking trip in England, get lost on the moors. After receiving a hostile reception at The Slaughtered Lamb they are told to "stick to the road" and "beware the moon." They chide each other, talk about girls back home, and try to make light of their perilous situation. The viewer, however, goes back to The Slaughtered Lamb where the locals are very concerned. So when a wolf starts howling, the audience is one step ahead of the Americans. Some shit is going to go down.

The boys are attacked. Jack is killed and David runs away in terror. When he gets his wits about him, he goes back for his friend and is mauled, but the locals drive off the creature. David wakes up in a London hospital with serious injuries and no memory of how he got there. The doctors and nurses believe a madman attacked David, but David insists it was a wolf. Because Landis never shows the creature during this opening sequence, there's room for doubt. We know, but we don't know.

Then the nightmares begin.

Werewolf legends belong to the subgenre of stories in which man is transformed

into a beast. This introduces problems of morality because the entity possesses a dual personality: man and monster.

Werewolves are unique among these creatures because they are reluctant monsters controlled not by their free will but the autonomy of the moon. When the moon is full, the good man becomes a bad beast. Vampires undergo similar transformations but they typically embrace their powers. Mummies and zombies animate the dead. While we have some sympathy for these undead creatures, dead is dead.

Werewolves have antecedents in nature (rabid dogs), religion (the son of god who is both god and man), health (psychosis and schizophrenia), and society (drunkenness and addiction). They are the most sympathetic of monsters because they fight their own nature, something that comic book heroes of the late twentieth century have adopted (The Hulk, mutants, et cetera.) When you kill a werewolf, you are also killing a good and decent person who may not have any knowledge of the evil committed by the beast within that emerges when the moon is full. In other words, as a monster, he lacks agency.

This complication is what drives *American Werewolf in London*. David is a werewolf who doesn't know it. Even when things get dodgy, he's basically just a kid trying to get laid.

While David convalesces, he dreams of running naked through the woods, hunting prey. He wakes up in the hospital, disoriented and confused. The dreams are vivid and disturbing. The world he finds himself in is strange. The doctors are stoic. The cops are cartoonish. The nurse is beautiful and kind. It's disorienting for the viewer too. What kind of movie is this?

Suddenly David is back in the suburbs with his family. The doorbell rings and when the doors open, madness ensues. Orc-like monsters in Gestapo uniforms burst into the living room and mow everyone down with machine gun fire before slashing David's throat and setting fire to his house. Like the very worst dreams, it comes completely out of nowhere yet feels terrifyingly real.



BILL PINKEL

I'd been tricked into a safe space only to find fresh horror.

Sitting in the movie theater, I was quietly freaking out. I wanted to see boobs, not blood, and I didn't know what to make of this horror show. So I was relieved when David wakes up from this nightmare in his hospital room. The hot nurse tries to comfort David by opening the curtains to let in some light. When she does, one of these orc Nazis jumps through the window and stabs the nurse.

I nearly shit my pants.

The dream within the dream is by now ■ old con, but thirteen-year-old me didn't know how to handle it. The movie was presenting me with multiple levels of reality and I didn't know which one to settle on. I'd been tricked into a safe space only to find fresh horror.

I asked my friend if we could leave. He looked at me like I was ■ Nazi orc.

The movie had more surprises in store. David wakes up again and his friend Jack is sitting on the edge of the bed. Jack is horribly disfigured from the werewolf attack and is starting to decompose. But his demeanor is glib, cheerful even, despite the fact he's cursed to roam the earth until the werewolf's curse is broken.

Naturally, David wants to know how to do that and Jack tells him.

"Kill yourself."

*

American Werewolf in London loses its way. It wants to be funny and fantastic and romantic. It doesn't make the mistake of being too earnest but the quips never stop. The scene where David transforms into ■ werewolf is epic considering it's all done with makeup and analog costume design. Makeup artist extraordinaire Rick Baker won the first of seven Oscars for his achievement in *American Werewolf in London*.

David's transformation from man to beast is credible because it's excruciating. We'd never ■■ that before. Michael Jackson ■■ wowed. He wanted to be transformed too and he hired Landis and Baker to direct the video for "Thriller."

But right when it feels like the movie has regressed into ■ silly farce with the werewolf trapped in Piccadilly Circus and ■ hundred coppers running around like extras in a Groucho Marx movie, Landis unleashes a brilliant scene of horrific violence. The werewolf goes berserk. Cops ■■ mauled. Cars crash into pedestrians. Heads roll and the body count climbs. It's breathtakingly violent because it comes at a

point where the audience has become numb to the possibility of laughing at the jokes or cowering in fear. Yes, the werewolf rips a few people apart. That's what werewolves do, but it's the ■■■■ hysteria of the crowd that causes the most damage.

*

For all its camp and slapstick humor, *American Werewolf in London* is a cult favorite because after all these years it retains its ability to surprise. In ■ decade that would give us werewolf-lite in *Teen Wolf*, Landis showed us the real pain of transformation.

But I'm haunted by all the times David's victims implore ■ good man to kill himself before the bad man does something unforgivable. I don't believe in werewolves, but I believe in demons. I think about the people who hear those self-destructive voices. People I have laughed with and learned from and love. People I have lost.

How can anyone who hears those voices and is compelled to act feel anything but cursed?

—Jim Ruland



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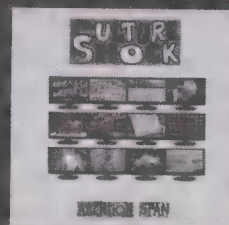
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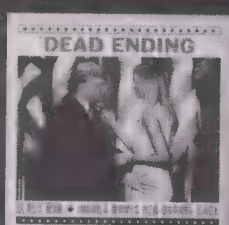
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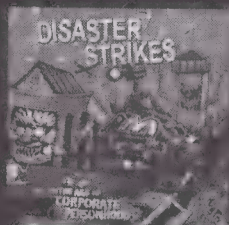
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I WOULD NEVER ADMIT THIS
TO YOU IN PUBLIC..

BUT I CAN SAY IT IN
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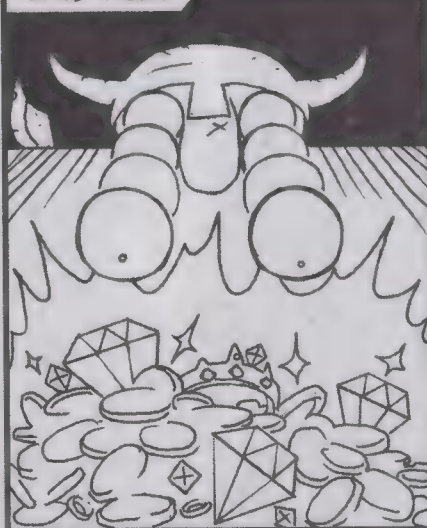
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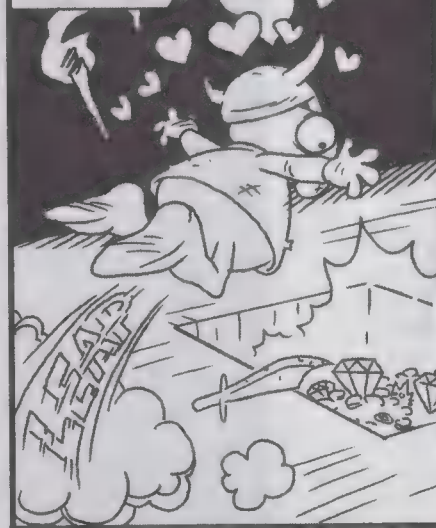
I GOT MY MIND ON MY \$
AND MY \$ ON MY MIND
WAY MORE THAN IS HEALTHY.



I'M STRESSED TRYING TO MAKE
ENDS MEET.



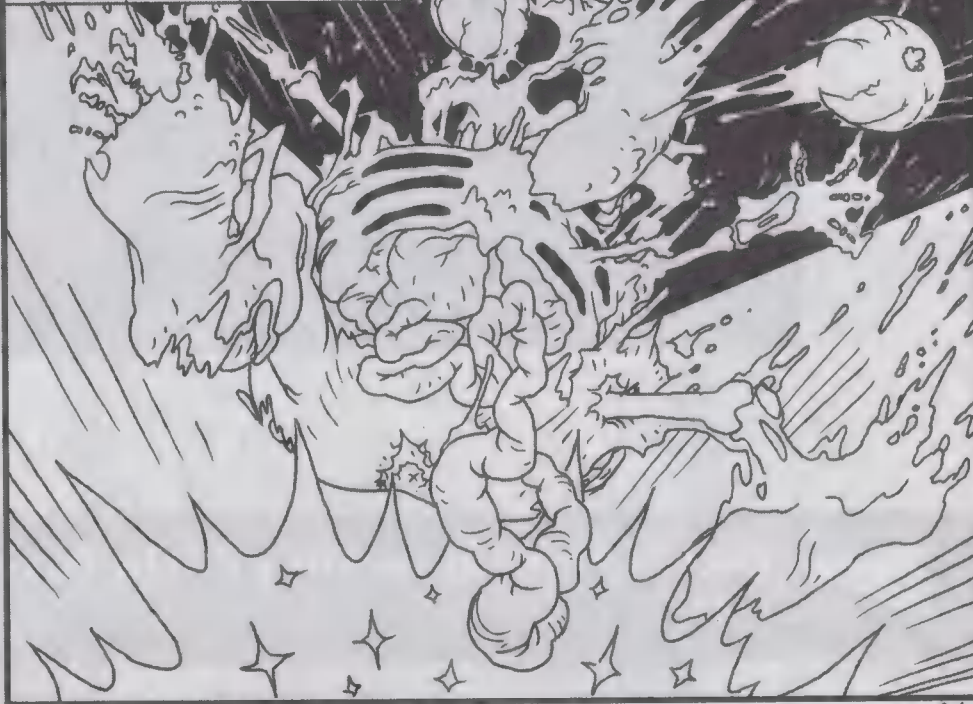
TO RAISE A FAMILY. TO
SURVIVE.



I FEEL MY WORLD
RESHAPING ITSELF...



AROUND MAKING THE
FUNKY GREEN DOLLAR.



IF YOU SEE ME PLEASE DON'T ASK

KN 8/17

RAZORCAKE 11



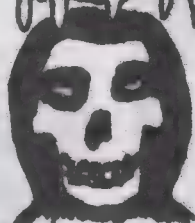
Rachel Framingheddu's Photo Page
Belly

IN CELEBRATION OF THIS
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YOU

TOP TEN THREE-DIGIT NUMBERS

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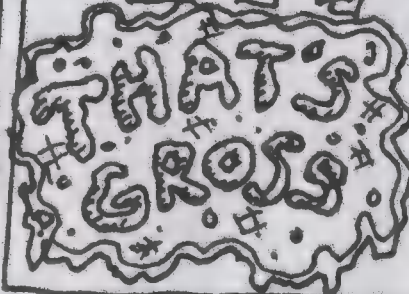
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IT'S A MISFITS SONG!

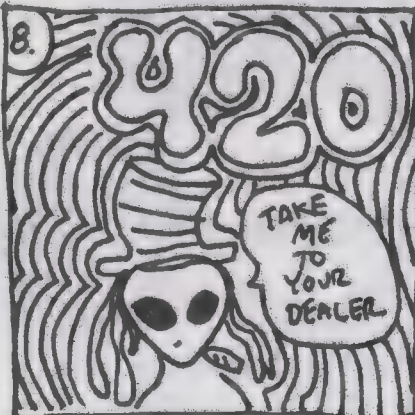
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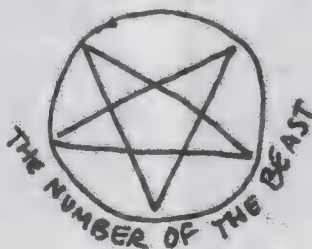
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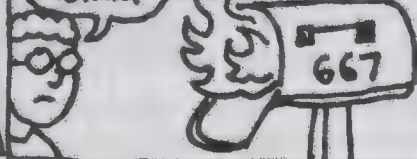


6.

667

NEIGHBOR OF THE BEAST!

DANG IT! MAILMAN
DELIVERED TO THE
WRONG ADDRESS
AGAIN.



5.

976

YOU HAVE TO BE KINDA OLD
TO GET THIS ONE.



4.

911

IT'S A JOKE!



3.

787

THE YEAR THAT "MONTY
PYTHON AND THE HOLY
GRAIL" TAKES PLACE.

I'LL BITE
BOTH YOUR
LEGS OFF!



2.

512

IS MY AREA CODE

YEA THIS ONE'S
LAME. SORRY, I
RAN OUT OF IDEAS.



1.

100

THE NUMBER OF ISSUES
OF THE AMAZING

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AMERICAN GRILLED CHEESE REVIEW

REV. NORD

Fuck
you, I like
counting.

A TERSE RAZORCAKE CENTENARY WIGOUT: ONE HUNDRED GREAT MOMENTS IN RECORDED PUNK ROCK

1. The "ONE-TWO-THREE-FOUR!" between "Cretin Hop" and "Rockaway Beach," and, by implication, all valid "ONE-TWO-THREE-FOUR!" instances on any Ramones record ever (this does not include the ersatz "ONE-TWO-THREE-FOUR!" utterances used from the late '80s on out, which served no purpose other than a sort of traditionalist window dressing, as the songs were actually started by a visual cue between Johnny and Marky). 2. The "FUCK THIS AND FUCK THAT" part of "Bodies" by the Sex Pistols. 3. The part where Mick Jones goes "Fuck 'em!" in "Jail Guitar Doors." 4. The part where Mick Jones goes "WE'LL BURN IT FUCKING DOWNWWNNNN—to a cinder" in "Stay Free." He had kind of a high voice but he swears well. 5. The little leads that come ripping out of nowhere after each line of the verse in "Demolition Girl" by the Saints. 6. The initial screaming chord in the Rezillos' version of "Somebody's Gonna Get Their Head Kicked in Tonight." Or the backing vocals. 7. The bridge in "Borstal Breakout" by Sham 69 where it just goes *BAP-chucka-chucka-chucka, BAP-chucka-chucka-chucka* with a bunch of hooliganism in the background. 8. "Hey, Ho! Let's Go!" obviously. 9. "Second verse, same as the first" from "Judy Is a Punk," which was lifted from "I'm Henry VIII, I Am" by Herman's Hermits. 10. "Third verse, different from the verse" from "Judy Is a Punk," which wasn't. 11. Billy Idol going "A-HEAVY HEAVY DUB!!! PUNK ROCKERS, rockers, rockers....!" in "Wild Dub" by Generation X. 12. Black Flag's *Nervous Breakdown* EP in its entirety. 13. Howard Devoto's sly "B'dum, b'dum!" during the break in "Boredom" by the Buzzcocks. 14. The live intro to "Get off the Phone" on the Heartbreakers *Live at Max's* album where Johnny and Walter both go: "This one's called... GET OFF THE FUCKIN' PHONE!!!" 15. The Circle Jerks *Group Sex* album, in its entirety. Fuck you, it's one thing. 16. Poly Styrene's "Some people say little girls should be seen and not heard" intro to "Oh Bondage, Up Yours" by X-Ray Spex. 17. Lora Logic's sax solo, *op. cit.* 18. The intro to the *Decline of Western Civilization* soundtrack. 19. The fade-in and fade-out-again after the train at the end of in "Down in the Tube Station at Midnight" by The Jam. 20. The double snare hit that signals the end of "Psycho Therapy." 21. The

background vocals in "Teenage Jerkoff" by the A's. Okay, maybe that's new wave. Whatever. 22. The five Crowd songs off of *Beach Blvd.* 23. The single/two-voice/three-part-harmony intro to "Ready Steady Go" by Generation X. 24. The descending and reascending bass intro and subsequent wild geetar solo leading off "Flying Saucer Attack" by the Rezillos. 25. Henry Garfield's impassioned "ARE YOU CRAZY, WENDEL?" at the beginning of "Riot" by S.O.A. 26. The wheezy old "Ladies and gentlemen, how do?" intro on the Damned's *Machine Gun Etiquette* album, followed by 27. the "HEY MAN, WHAT'S HAPPENING?" interjection that kicks off *IL*, the bass intro to "Love Song." On that note, 29. When the piano intro suddenly yields to the electrified fusillade of guitars on "Melody Lee," *IL* album, which ends with 30. The "nibbled to death by an okapi" fade out which concludes the record's festivities. 31. The off-handed "START!" which kicks off the maniacal guitar solo in the Dickies' version of "Communication Breakdown." 32. Handsome Dick Manitoba's continually botched intro to "Two Tub Man" on the Dictators *Fuck 'Em If They Can't Take a Joke* live cassette. 33. Milo's bland "I want to be stereotyped. I want to be classified" on "Suburban Home" by the Descendents. 34. The nutty drum intro to "Shitter" by the Cockney Rejects. 35. The part in "Wild Weekend" by the Zeros where the bass player either hits a wrong note or intentionally hangs on the high note for one count too long and you can't tell if he goofed up or he wanted to do that but it rules anyway. 36. When that little five-note phrase in the guitar solo in "Knock Me Down" by the Outlets first comes out of the left speaker, then the right speaker, then both speakers together. 37. The entirety of "The Aba-Daba-Do Dance" by T. Lance & The Cocktails. 38. The entirety of "Ça Plane Pour Moi" by Plastic Bertrand. 39. The part in "What Love Is" by the Dead Boys where it stops cold for four beats and all you hear is echoed guitar remnants: *BIP-bip-bip-bip!* 40. The part in the live version of "Belsen Was a Gas" off the *Great Rock & Roll Swindle* album where Johnny Rotten is all like "Ha ha ha, ha ha ha! HA HA HA, HA HA HA!!! YRRRAAGRRRHHRH HAAAAHAHHH!!!" 41. The goofy descending bells that signal the re-emergence from the middle bit of "Bad Brain" by the

Ramones. 42. The sax solo in "Judy Says (Knock You in the Head Tonight)" by the Vibrators. 43. "1-2-3-4, cretins wanna hop some more!" in "Cretin Hop" by the Ramones. 44. "4-5-6-7, all good cretins go to heaven," *op. cit.* 45. "1-2-3, 4-5-6, gonna do a dance and it goes like this" in "Stranglehold" by the UK Subs. 46. "5-6-7, 8-9-10, you want *mmmm* we'll do it again," *op. cit.* 47. The "1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8" before the guitar solo in "Now I Wanna Sniff Some Glue" by the Ramones. 48. Fuck you, I like counting. 49. Said guitar solo itself. 50. The "17-18-19-21!" part of "Stuck in the Middle" off the Replacements *Stink* EP. 51. Actually, the whole first side of the Replacements *Stink* EP, come to think of it. Especially the part with the cops. 52. The drum intro to "Brickfield Nights" by the Boys. 53. The largely one-note guitar solo in "Livin' in the City," also by the Boys. 54. The female backing vocals in "You Make Me Feel Cheap" by CH3, which I once sang live with them. 55. The "HEY!" in "I'm Alive" by 999. 56. "So What" by the Anti-Nowhere League in general, unless Metallica is covering it. 57. The "1-2-3-OH-SHE'S-SO!" intro to "So Messed Up" off the first Damned album. 58. The way they re-start that song one *mmmm* time right when you figure they've already smashed up their instruments and are done for the day. 59. The Jam's version of the *Batman* theme winding down into a *mmmm* of squiggly, plummeting feedback and you figure it, too, might be done for the day, but then the snare hits and they lunge back into it to continue their never-ending battle for truth, justice and the American Way. Oops, wrong superhero theme. 60. Iggy's remix of *Raw Power*. 61. The wolfman howl in "Personality Crisis" by the New York Dolls. 62. The parts in "Apocalypse Girl" by the Humpers where Scott Drake continually attempts to spell out words too long for him to actually spell: "C-A-T-A-S-T-R," "A-P-O-C-A-L-Y" and "S-T-U-P-I-D-I." Hey, at least he tried! 63. The guitar solo in "Now I Know" by the Rip Offs. 64. The intro to "Teenage Kicks" by the Undertones. 65. The intro to "Get Over You" by the Undertones, if you can whistle. 66. The matter-of-fact count-in to "Yellow Pills" by 20/20. Okay, that's kinda new wave, too. 67. Steve Diggle yelling "I'VE GOT ALL THE ANSWERS!" as "Mad Mad Judy" by the Buzzcocks breaks down. 68. Jack Grisham's "PRESIDENT REAGAN



All valid “ONE-TWO-THREE-FOUR!” instances on any Ramones record ever.

CAN SHOVE IT!” at the end of “Superficial Love” by TSOL. 69. The way the guitar solo comes flying in in the middle of “World War III,” same record. 70. Pretty much all of the Dwarves *Blood, Guts & Pussy* CD. 71. The mono mix of the first Ramones album. 72. The “D-U-M-B, everyone’s accusing me” part in “Pinhead,” especially during the live footage in *Rock ‘n’ Roll High School*, where the on-screen caption reads “D-M-U-B.” 73. The conversation with the cop that Doc Dart recorded and put between the songs of the first *Crucifucks* cassette. 74. The part in “Gimme Your Heart” by the Subs where they’re just pounding on the drums and yelling “GIMME!!!” like a buncha cavemen. 75. Chris Bailey slowly counting to eight during the lengthy endgame of “Erotic Neurotic” by the Saints. 76. The call-and-response vocals regarding self-inflicted blindness in “Lights Out” by the Angry Samoans. 77. The chorus and very existence of “Baby Baby Baby Baby Baby I Love You” by Sweet Baby. 78. The guitar solo in “Zombie” by the Infections. 79. Pretty much everything Teengenerate ever did. 80. The “WEEEEEE... WON’T TAKE ANY SHIT!!!” intro to

“Ready to Fight” by Negative Approach. 81. When “Wrong, Wrong, Wrong” by the Fastbacks builds to a mighty crescendo, stops cold, and ends with a chorus of just voice and an unplugged electric guitar. 82. The one backing vocal in “Mental Ward” by the Dickies that isn’t a “NO!” but a “FUCK YOU!” 83. Joe Strummer’s wise-ass “yeah yeah!” in “Clash City Rockers.” 84. Joe’s deathless delivery of the “COM-PLAINTS! COM-PLAINTS! WOT AN OLD BAG!” couplet in “Garageland” as well. 85. Claude “Kickboy Face” Bessy’s ruminations on the existential crises besetting new wave on the *Decline* soundtrack. 86. When the cymbal rhythms in “Bullet” by the Misfits switch from eighth notes on the hi-hat to quarter notes on the ride. 87. Tesco Vee’s nutty deejay effusions in “Punker-ama” by the Meatmen. 88. Dr. Frank of the Mr. T Experience, having just condensed the meat of his collegiate thesis to about sixty seconds of rapid-fire lyricizing, rhymes “the complicated history of the concept of the soul” with, simply, “rock’n’roll!” 89. And somehow, in the midst of a seventy-eight second song, he finds time to end his dissertation with a footnote and a

suggested reading list, concluding with the Latin abbreviation “Ibid.” 90. Wire’s very invention of the phrase “12XU.” 91. The guitar solo in “Yeah Yeah” by the Revillos. 92. The drum solo in “Yeah Yeah” by the Revillos. 93. I suppose the bass solo in “Yeah Yeah” by the Revillos, even though there is more than one note in it so it is cheating. 94. The “1-2-3-4-5-6” count in to “Roadrunner” by the Modern Lovers. 95. The “My name is... God. FUCK YOU!” intro to “Hardcore Rules” by Hated Youth. 96. “96 Tears” by ? And The Mysterians. I mean, for fuck’s sake, the guy’s name is a question mark. 97. Much as I hate to admit it, Pantin’ Henry’s “my name is Henry... and you’re here with me now” from “Damaged” was pretty cool back in the day. 98. Watson’s various cowardly remonstrances in “My Dear Watson” by Thee Headcoats. 99. The finger squeaks when the guitars come back in after the “Go-go-go-go-GOODBYE!” part of “Glad To See You Go.” 100. “100 Punks Rule” by Generation X! See you at the Bicentennial, Mr. Gleason!

—Love, Nerf





What a big
small world!

Six Degrees

Razorcake, the zine you're holding in your hands, is now officially one-hundred issues in. That's no small feat, considering the unimaginable amount of hours put into each issue, while the entire operation runs on a more-than-usual limited budget. Besides the obvious fact of getting turned on to new artists, being involved in a writer since this publication's beginning has led me down some very interesting roads, including striking up friendships that hold strong today.

Any person who has been involved in the six degrees of the small world of punk rock across this planet knows this to be true. Just this past last weekend of July, Big Drill Car, one of my fave old bands, pulled together its original lineup and played a couple local shows in SoCal. They celebrated the almost thirtieth anniversary of their first EP, *Small Block*, recorded back in 1988. While the band has reformed a few times over the past nine years, it was especially cool seeing them perform the debut EP in its entirety, then cranking out a shit ton more songs to balance out both shows.

It almost caught me off guard when I stopped to think it's been almost thirty years I've been a gnarly, diehard fan of BDC. The smile that crept across my face right then and there glowed through all the way to my insides, beaming to the center of my guts. Not only is that beautiful, but when one of the bands that causes this realization is still around, rocking it out right in front of you, that's a glorious thing. Besides the opportunity to watch and catch up with bands, it's also the other people involved who make the whole trip that much more enjoyable. There was a shared exhibit in conjunction with the first BDC show. Although Art Fuentes, my childhood brotherman and *Razorcake's* own, was planning on going to the gig with us, I had no clue he was amongst the chosen grip of artists who were summoned to create a piece for the special occasion. Like I said, six degrees.

My pal Glenn is another one of my old homies who lives in Houston, TX. I met Glenn through the classified ads back when the zine *Flipside* was still being published. As soon as we found out we were both heavy duty BDC fans, we continuously kept in touch. Glenn scraped airfare together as often as he could to fly out for BDC shows, crashing at my place every time, usually videotaping the shows. We quickly ended up becoming solid

friends, even with the over fifteen-hundred miles between L.A. and Houston. We were even in each other's weddings—all in part to a band that we both go apeshit over. This past weekend, we got to do it once again.

When I first started to play with other garage freaks of nature in high school, there was a guy named Bill I clicked with right away. We became good friends, and got together to throw his songs around. We even ended up resurrecting 3 Minute Hero, one of Bill's earlier bands, a few years later after we got outta high school. Our bass player Marc was buddies with one of the old crew members from Dramarama, which was a plus in my book, being that I was—and still am—quite a big fan (and have always felt Dramarama was one of the more sorely underrated bands, even to this day).

It was around then I found out their singer, John Easdale, lived with his family around the corner from my old apartment, literally. One thing led to another, and I found out John dug what Bill was writing. He came down to the recording studio. He sat in alongside the engineer while we tracked an EP's worth of material, all in part by sharing some garage sessions with my homie Bill. (Side note: the Bill I speak of is the same Bill who I wrote about back in issue #75. When we first met in photo class in high school, he turned me onto pre-Reign in Blood Slayer for the first time.)

Before *Razorcake*, I had written for *Flipside*, and I got into doing that in part due to my pal Ken "All Night Rocker" Ramsey, who had already been writing for *Flipside* on and off the time. I used to drive down to the *Flipside* office with Ken, so's he could drop off his submissions and pick up review material. It was around this time I met our own Todd Taylor, who was co-editing at the time. Showing some interest in writing for the zine, Todd set me up with a super primitive, tiny-screened combo desktop that had a floppy disk drive for me to save all my reviews, interviews, and columns (laugh all you want, fuckers, this was the mid-'90s). I soon upgraded, buying a brand new computer with dial-up internet, so I could send my submissions to Todd without having to make the haul down to the office every time.

I also soon found out another *Flipside* staffer, Martin McMartin, was a kindred BDC spirit, and we started hitting all kinds of shows just about every weekend. Martin and Ken were also big on a Long Beach band

I was fond of called The Humpers. Martin even managed them to some extent, which was a party in its own right. It was through Marty I met the punk rock and rolling outfit, and shows with all of us in tow were always good for a laugh or three, not to mention the drunken shenanigans I faced. We also had splendid times with The Candy Snatchers when they came through.

Ken's apartment was usually ground zero for any touring band rolling through Long Beach that he was pals with, while Marty's place over in Hollywood was the staging area for the rock happening out on that end. Now that I think of it, Marty and Ken were with me at the very last Ramones show here in L.A. back in 1996. All of this is in part to writing for one of the longest-running punk zine based on the West Coast. (Since the beginning of '77.)

Towards the end of *Flipside*, I'd met and became friendly with Jimmy Alvarado, the main man when you had any kind of inquiry regarding the eastside of Los Angeles. Jimmy had been in a grip of bands, and was still at it during that time. It wasn't until we both started writing for *Razorcake* in 2001 that we saw each other a bit more regularly. Then it took another fifteen years for me to finally put together a band that we could call our own: La Tuya. Not only has La Tuya been a barrel of fuckin' monkeys this past year and a half, but the full length we recently recorded has surpassed what we thought this band would end up doing in the first place. This is all in part to a zine published by like-minded folk. What the hell more could you ask for?

The most important person who I've met over the years within these six degrees is my wife. We didn't even know it at the time, as this was back in 1999, four years before we even met in 2003. Yvonne had worked for Rhino Entertainment in the past as a publicist, usually working with artists to get out the word on their box set collections, through print interviews with national magazines, radio, and television. A few of the artists she worked with were Sugar Hill Gang, Devo, and the Ramones.

In 1999, Yvonne was working the press for the Ramones *Anthology* collection, dealing quite a bit with Johnny, since he'd moved out here after the Ramones retired. Part of her job included going to NYC for a couple of days to promote an upcoming in-store Union Square. Most of her trip was scheduled wrangling Joey to and from



MARCOS SIREF

This is all in part to a zine published by like-minded folk. What the hell more could you ask for?

interviews—Howard Stern, Conan O'Brien, MTV, and whatnot. She and Joey got along really well. The in-store, however, was a whole other test of patience, with all the different personalities sitting down at one table to sign things for fans.

Here's where the strange coincidences happen. Yvonne and I were both born in Los Angeles, grew up within fifteen miles of each other and didn't have a single friend in common. I knew Dee Dee and Marky fairly well around this time, having done interviews with both of them for *Flipside*, and kept in touch with both. My band at the time, Cynical, shared our gear for a few

shows we did with The Ramainz (Dee Dee, Marky, and Dee Dee's wife Barbara). These shows were just a few weeks before the in-store. My drummer pal Bobby Schayer (ex-Bad Religion) was living in NYC at the time and had showed up to that in-store to say hello and pay his respects to the guys. Oddly enough, Yvonne, who didn't know him at all, spotted him waiting in line and tried to bring him over to the table directly so he could talk with everyone, but Bob politely waited in line with the rest of the crowd of fans.

Fast forward from 1999 to 2014: Yvonne and I met in 2003, got married in 2009. Bobby moved from NYC to Portland, then moved

back down to L.A. in 2014. When he came by for a visit, the subject of the Ramones came up and Yvonne suddenly remembered the in-store from fifteen years prior, as did Bobby. All three of us tripped out on that. What a big small world!

The power of the Ramones compels you!
It is the rock 'n' roll itself that commands you!

Here's to one hundred more, Todd.

—Designated Dale
designateddale@yahoo.com

ASIAN GOTH PUNKS RULE *the* WORLD!



Starring:



Aya

&

Chris

BY MARINAOMI



Geez, Aya!
We're just
getting coffee.

Shut
it.

MARINAOMI



Dan Monick's Photo Page

Chol "Disco" Dan, Wally Towers, April Est. 2000, RIP

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SO SICK



CHICO SIMIO #62

"TALES
FROM THE
CHIMP -
COMIC-CON
2017"

- ART.

I'VE SEEN A LOT OF COMIC-CON HATE THIS YEAR ON-
LINE...I SEE THE USUAL VENDOR COMMENTS ABOUT
SALES BEING DOWN FROM YEARS PAST, BUT THIS
YEAR I SEE A LOT OF FAN HATE.

PEOPLE ARE REALLY UPSET ABOUT THE
STATE OF COMIC-CON AND ARE SAYING
THEY WILL NOT RETURN.

*@#%
!!!



NOW, IS COMIC-CON
THE PERFECT FAN
EXPERIENCE???

NO.

B
U
T

THERE'S SO MUCH STUFF GOING ON
AROUND YOU! AWESOME COSPLAY!
NEW COMICS THAT YOU'VE NEVER
HEARD OF! GREAT PANELS THAT MIGHT
ACTUALLY INSPIRE YOU! NEW PEOPLE
TO MEET! OLD FRIENDS TO HUG! EVEN
WAITING IN LINE CAN BE FUN IF YOU
STRIKE UP A CONVERSATION!

IF YOU TAKE IT
FOR WHAT IT IS
AND REALIZE...



BUT THERE'S
ONE THING
YOU CAN'T
ESCAPE, NO
MATTER
HOW HARD
YOU TRY OR
PREPARE.



YER DOGS ARE
GONNA BE
BARKING BY
THE END OF
THE WEEK!



PURO PINCHE POETRY GRITOS DEL BARRIO

EDITED BY EVER VELASQUEZ AND NICOLE MACIAS

**Our
country is
in hell.**

Where I'm From

I am from an unfinished patchwork quilt
From Fruit Striped gum
Apple Farm Hot Cider
I am from a tiny studio apartment
It felt cozy, calentita
I am from the fresh lavender
the violets
small tiny flowers
I'm from the gatherings at Christmas
Texican grandparents

Una bola de primas y primos
I'm from
loud talkers, music lovers
A long hospital stay
Mi propio terreno
una vaca
Orizaba
Mi abuelita Violeta Seráfico
She prays for me.
El Nombre del Padre,
del Hijo,
del Espiritu Santo

AMÉN

Making the sign of the cross
Tamales and horchata
From
The long dangerous walk my father made to
be here
From Veracruz, Mexico
A tiny purple flower
independent, cabezuda
I am no shrinking violet!



El Face Del Cucui

El chukie ya está grande
Quiere ser jefe de este paiz
regresa los papas ■ México
Construir un pared
Destruído sueños
¡ Wachallé !
El Cucú se llama

Donald Trump

Las Nombres They Pick for "Me"

Mi abuelita siempre me dice ¿"que mi Reyna"?
she also calls ■ Miss America when I'm
lazy and "sleep in."

**Sir your
grand
vision
is as
small
as the
view
lens
scope
on your
rifle.**

ROQUE TOMES (IG: @illiopeep)

Mi grandpa me dice mi princesa,
My daddy calls me "bé bé", but he also calls
me la chimoltrufia
My cousins call me Milli on account of-my
middle ■■■■ is Milagros
Patti calls me la mula
on account of—I roll my eyes and say
"whatever"
My mom calls me Chi-na-ca
on account of that—I didn't know how to
pronounce Chicana
But today reading to amazing poets

I think I'll call myself
La Chingonita!

Red, White and Who? A Conversation with ■ Villain

I will build a wall, no Mexicans will enter,
they're terrorists, drug dealers, murders.

Is that what he thinks? Really? Illegal bad
people, really? Some Mexican who's bad?

I will send them back to their awful country.

*Me dices lo que tú quieres, pero no más
eres alguien
que no sabe cómo querer, luchar, amar*
You can tell ■ what you want,
but you're just someone who doesn't know
how to care, fight, love.

You are stupid, sit down, go back to
Univision
Do you mean Univision?

I speak to border guys
Do you mean Border Patrol?

Get out, go back to your country.
This is my country, I am a U.S. Citizen!

I can step onto the streets of Broadway,
shoot anyone and I won't get arrested

Do you know what it really means to be
Mexican, the people who put grapes and
strawberries on your table?

Under ■ constant shadow of fear
Constantemente bajo ■■ sombra de miedo

Fear that you will return our parents back to
Mexico

Temor que ■■ a regresar nuestros padres ■ México

Fear that you will destroy the dreams of the
Dreamers

*Miedo que ■■ a destruir sueños de los
Soñadores*

Fear that you will build ■ wall on this land
that once belonged to Mexico

*Temor de que ■■ a construir ■■ pader
sobre ■■ tierra que antes erer de México*

Ser Mexicano is to care, fight, love
Querer, luchar, ■■

Believe it or not I am really rich people like
me

I will be the greatest jobs president ever!
I will build ■ great, great wall and Mexico
will pay for that wall.

Sir your grand vision is ■ small as the view
lens scope on your rifle.

What you fight for is "wrong, wrong,
wrong"

"Mal, mal, mal"

Every word that comes out of your mouth
comes out like ■ bullet of hate!
You don't even know what the words liberty
and freedom mean
It is "We the people" Not "I, I, I"

I will cleanse this land from its bruises

But you don't cleanse you hate.

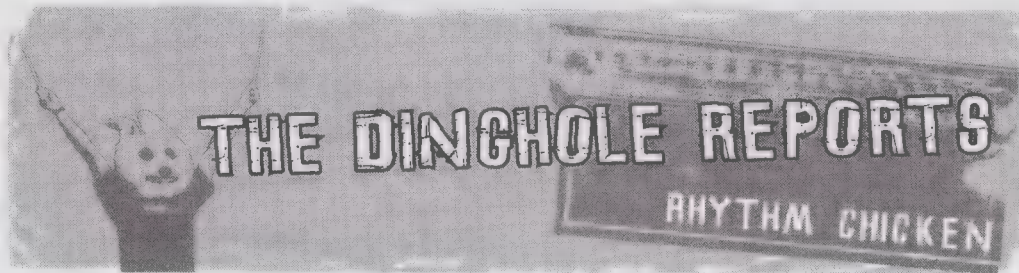
Our country is going to hell, the Mexican
border is a sieve

Our country is in hell

—Violeta M. Tablilla-Esquivel

*Violeta is ■ ten-year-old, L.A.-based poet who
writes poems interweaved with Spanish. She
is the daughter of ■■ undocumented father
who was picked up by ICE one morning ■■
her way to school (the first day of fourth
grade, just days after her ninth birthday.)
Violeta has ■ story to share and it is the voice
of today's ten-year-old youth scared about
the uncertainty of their world. Follow her
journey @lapoetavioleta.*





**STILL
CLUCKIN'
CLUCKING!**

Rhythm Chili

Punk rock is like soup. Of course I would claim punk rock is like soup. I make a lot of soup daily. I also have been an ardent fan of most things punk rock for going on thirty-some years. Most days I listen to punk rock while making and selling soup. I even sold my soup at a punk rock show once. Sometimes I like to think of my Rhythm Chili as the Ramones of soup, or the Black Flag of soup. I'm also **■** **■** **■** I'm probably the only person, or one of a scant few, who thinks punk rock is like soup. That alone is kind of punk rock.

Of course, the question of "What is punk rock?" could be debated for centuries, **■** **■** we'll just skip past that. Chances are, if you are reading *Razorcake*, you probably have your own working answer to that question anyway. As for how punk rock is *like soup*, well there are millions of different kinds of soup. Just like a thin chicken noodle soup is nothing like a robust Cajun gumbo, the first Devo album sounds nothing like Minor Threat. Just like there are thick cream soups and thin broth soups, there is straight-edge hardcore and watered-down synth punk. Some soups easily fit into certain genres while others simply defy categorization.

Sometimes making **■** soup **■** **■** **■** be like making a punk rock band. There is **■** recipe which can be followed or ignored. There is a lot of room for adding your own personal touch or style. This celery is colorless and mass produced. Let's replace it with some dark green organic stuff. This drummer is generic and boring. Let's get rid of that person and get that weirdo down the street who plays like their **■** **■** **■** is on fire! You can get **■** **■** **■** creative as you want while making soup, just **■** **■** **■** most good punk rock has **■** high level of creativity involved. Just as the good punk rock bands get asked to play all the shows, my **■** **■** **■** popular soups get requested a lot and sell out regularly. Selling out of soup, however, is **■** **■** **■** bit more desirable than *selling out* in punk rock.

Here at my soup shop, I have **■** **■** **■** few customers who really enjoy mixing two or three soups in the same bowl. One popular concoction has become known **■** **■** **■** the Bloody Eyeball, filling two-thirds of a bowl with Irish Root Soup and then finishing it off with **■** **■** **■** clump of Rhythm Chili plopped right in the center. The

Bloody Eyeball *sounds* pretty punk rock! This is similar to mixing two or three different styles of music in the same song, a la Bad Brains or Operation Ivy. I'm willing to bet the uptight, cranky old lady who can't stand the Sex Pistols would also have trouble with my Rhythm Chili. I'm also willing to bet she could easily handle my Bohemian Potato Chowder while listening to **■** **■** **■** milder Talking Heads song.

Seriously, though, folks; soup is like **■** **■** **■** parade. There are millions of different kinds of floats in **■** **■** **■** parade. Parades **■** **■** **■** have everything from the high school marching band to an enormous Spider-Man balloon flying overhead. Some floats are tame and harmless, like the Lions Club or the Shriners in their little cars. Those are the potato chowders of the parade. Then there are the loud, boisterous and attention-grabbing floats, the real chilis and gumbos of the parade! The quality of **■** **■** **■** parade float **■** **■** **■** vary with the creativity in its recipe. Some floats limp through the parade quite unnoticed while others demand the attention and respect of the crowds!

So, as you can plainly see, punk rock is like **■** **■** **■** parade. Individuality and creativity **■** **■** **■** rewarded with the adoration of the crowd. What's on the cover of the Dead Kennedys' *Frankenchrist* album? **■** **■** **■** *a parade!* Some parade floats douse the crowds with water balloons or start an all-out food fight with the record store along the parade route, much like Gwar covers their audience with blood, vomit, and other dainty bodily juices. Sometimes a parade float is simply the prom queen and king smiling and waving from **■** **■** **■** red convertible. That is the parade equivalent to Avril Lavigne or **■** **■** **■** dude from My Chemical Romance. Just **■** **■** **■** a punk show has many opening bands and then all the anticipation builds up for the almighty headlining act, so do all the early floats in a Christmas parade get the crowd pumped to cheer on Santa Claus at the end. Each parade float has **■** **■** **■** recipe.

One could argue there is **■** **■** **■** recipe for a punk rock band. One might even argue there is **■** **■** **■** recipe for **■** **■** **■** well-thought-out parade float. When it comes to making soups, I actually don't even use recipes, but that's another story. Let's recap what we've learned today. Punk rock is like soup. Soup is like **■** **■** **■** parade. Punk rock is

like **■** **■** **■** parade. If these three indisputable facts were somehow displayed **■** **■** **■** Venn diagram, there may or may not be a common area shared by all three. Here at Czarnuszka Labs, we refer to the **■** **■** **■** as the Rhythm Chicken. If there is one entity on this earth which can claim the crown for the punk/soup/parade trifecta, it's yours truly. Rhythm Chicken, the soup-master of parade punk!

**Dinghole Report #158: The
Parade Parish Return!
(Rhythm Chicken long
awaited sighting #103)**

RAZORCAKE ISSUE #100... whew!

It has been **■** **■** **■** whole two years since our hero's last parade appearance. Having two metal rods and four metal screws affixed to my spine kinda slowed **■** **■** **■** down a bit there, but like **■** **■** **■** scrappy weasel hungry for meat, the Rhythm Chicken clawed his way back atop the roost! Here, in the Bailey's Harbor Fourth of July Parade, you can see the Rhythm Chicken in his natural habitat! *Smell* the sweat, beer, and soup stench! *See* the atrocious display of madcap lunacy! *Listen* to the talentless ruckus **■** **■** **■** it explodes from his battered kit! *Feel* the infectious vibes of off-kilter, offbeat, and off-the-wall full-blown inappropriateness! On this historic Chicken-dependence Day, the ruckus returned to the parade world in Bailey's Harbor, Wis.

As with all previous chicken parade appearances, there was little or no planning. I knew my back would be tender and I probably shouldn't jump right back into the full-contact Chicken show, so I had to alter this parade float's recipe **■** **■** **■** little bit. I included a little less of one ingredient and a little more of another. This year I doubled up on the stupid signs adorning the float! At the Dollar Tree in Sturgeon Bay, Wis., I bought ten white poster boards and two big, thick markers, total cost: \$7.39. The night before the parade I put marker to poster board to create the low-rent signage to wow, offend, and confuse the wary parade goers!

Some of my favorite signs from this year's chicken float were as follows:

**KIELBASA POWER!
STILL CLUCKIN' CLUCKING!
RHYTHM RUCKUS RETURNS!
SEX PISTOLS FOR PRESIDENT!**

Punk rock is like soup.



Soup is like a parade.

Punk rock is like a parade.

(Not sure why that one came to be, but you gotta admit they would do a better job than our current baboon in chief.), MY OTHER TRACTOR IS A BROOM!, DON'T LAUGH IT'S PAID FOR!, and my new favorite....WORST FLOAT EVER! Just one hour before parade time the drums were thrown up on the flatbed trailer, pulled by the county's most famous tractor, previously belonging to Freddy K, the Door County Polka King! Signs were frantically taped up all over the sides of the trailer. An hour's worth of Hamms cans were emptied by my parade crew and affixed to the float—authentic real-life decorations! My Hen orchestrated her troop of candy-throwers as we neared the starting point.

As with every parade in the history of the Rhythm Chicken, it was a hoot. I pounded out my ruckus rock, children cheered, ladies screamed, and heads were scratched! As is always the case in this parade, the two taverns on the route are the two most riotous points of the parade. In front of each tavern's lively crowd I pounded my hardest and gave them all the chaos I could muster! Playing just short of my full potential in the interests of self-preservation, I relied on one surprise sign especially for these two crowds, which I held up high above my head. It had an arrow pointing down to me and simply said NO UNDERWEAR!, which is funny because I was actually wearing underwear.

The parade was a smash success. Fun was had by all. My back survived with minimal discomfort. *Minimal discomfort!* How punk is *that*? About an hour after the chaos as we were all tearing down the impromptu float, Little Gracie, one of the children throwing candy, approached me and sheepishly asked if she could take one of the signs home with her. I told her, "Of course!" and watched as she ran up to one sign in particular and yanked it off the float. Her father Chad, the driver of the tractor, instantly took a photo of her posing with her favorite sign. It said SOUP IS DUMB!

—Rhythm Chicken

WHO ARE YOU?

I have a gift for you and it is some Snoop bootleg chocolate.

Nardwuar vs. Snoop Doggy Dogg (2017)

The Human Serviette

Nardwuar: Who are you?

Snoop Dogg: My name is big Snoop Dogg from the LBC.

Nardwuar: Welcome to South by Southwest in Austin, Texas, Snoop Dogg.

Snoop Dogg: Thank you Nardwuar, ■ pleasure to ■■ you again, mang.

Nardwuar: Right off the bat, Snoop, I have ■ gift for you and it is some Snoop bootleg chocolate. Have you seen this?

[Nardwuar gives Snoop ■ chocolate bar]

Snoop Dogg: What the fuck? Choc Stars? Who made ■■■ candy with ■ dog that looked damn near like me with ponytails?

Nardwuar: And look on the back what it says, "Pets Rock."

Snoop Dogg: [reading label] "Pets Rock. The well-known individuals have not had any involvement in the creation of images and they have not approved it nor has approval been sought." Oh wow. It's dope, though. I like it, though.

Nardwuar: Is there much Snoop bootleg stuff out there?

Snoop Dogg: There really is, but I can't be mad at it. That means that I'm in demand.

Nardwuar: And usually I talk to you in Canada, Snoop, but here is a gift from Canada, all the way to Austin.

[Nardwuar gives a gift to Snoop]

Snoop Dogg: A Cohiba?

Nardwuar: Yes.

Snoop Dogg: That is a Cuban Cohiba, a real deal. You know I split one of these about a month ago and put some of that fluid inside of it and mmm! Man, I tell you.

Nardwuar: Are they hard to get in America?

Snoop Dogg: Nah, you've got to know the right people. I know some of the right people, you know what I'm saying?

Nardwuar: Seventy bucks all the way from Vancouver to you. Thank you, Darnel.

Snoop Dogg: Thank you Darnel, good out. Appreciate you.

Nardwuar: Snoop, what is the importance of Super Socco?

Snoop Dogg: Super Socco, the importance of that is to be able to mix it with gin. It was ■ great ingredient that complemented the gin back in the '80s. You know, Super Socco was such a tangy, sweet, refreshing drink to mix with your gin. And then you could take the

gin and put it in the Super Socco bottle and just mob around with the bottle and you were Super Socco'd in all day. You know, King Tee had ■ verse, he said [singing lyrics], "Fuck it I said fuck it, Super Socco and gin, I'm feeling like ■ fool."

Nardwuar: Snoop Doggy Dogg, is Martha Stewart a G?

Snoop Dogg: A double G. She's ■ G. She's ■ grandmother and ■ good lady.

Nardwuar: She loves the special spices, doesn't she?

Snoop Dogg: Yeah, she loves the seasonings, spices—and she loves ■ lot of meat, meat byproducts.

Nardwuar: Everything regarding (*Martha & Snoop's*) *Potluck Dinner Party* seems to be grass-related.

Snoop Dogg: Yeah, I mean, you know, it's my grass roots, you know. We ■■■ from the rooter to the tooter so, you know, we start from the ground up.

Nardwuar: I have another gift for you. Last time I talked to you, Snoop Doggy Dogg, you said bring this record, Kurtis Blow, *Basketball*. So I did, for you, Snoop.

[Nardwuar gives an LP to Snoop.]

Snoop Dogg: On Polydor records, Kurtis Blow, *Basketball*.

Nardwuar: Because you said that is the only basketball record that matters.

Snoop Dogg: It is the only one that matters. It's my favorite sport. [singing] "I like the way they dribble up and down the court just like I'm the king on the microphone doing Doctor J and Moses Malone."

Nardwuar: And you are *Schnoop*...

Snoop Dogg: Doggy Dogg.

Nardwuar: Doggy Dogg. And also Schnoop, I wanted to ask you about these sports-related records right here. What can you say about these sports-related records right here? *Just Say No*.

[Nardwuar hands Snoop some LPs.]

Snoop Dogg: Oh, this is the one that the Lakers did, *Just Say No*. Byron Scott had a dope-ass rap on here. They just brought that up the other day when he was on SportsCenter, and this is the Fat Boys with the fridge. I remember that one, *Chillin' with the Refrigerator*. It was a lot of fat in this photo shoot right here.

Nardwuar: Have you been to OJ's house?

Snoop Dogg: Have I been to OJ's house? No I haven't.

Nardwuar: Back in the day?

Snoop Dogg: Oh, yeah. Me and OJ, man, we used to hang out like a motherfucker. I thought you meant since then. No, I ain't been over to that motherfucker's since then. But before, hell yeah. Me and Orenthal had ■ good time together.

Nardwuar: Schnoop Doggy Dogg, what is the importance of these guys right here, Gangsters & Thugs, from Compton. Do you know them at all?

[Nardwuar hands an LP to Snoop.]

Snoop Dogg: I know cuz—hang out with my brother—and I know cuz [laughs]. This nigger be hanging out with my brother. I didn't know this nigger was in this group. Gangsters & Thugs. And I know this nigger up here, too [laughs]. This shit crazy.

Nardwuar: So you've ■■■ them around?

Snoop Dogg: I've ■■■ them niggers in real life, man. I can't believe y'all put an album out, man. Looky here, man, "Endonisha," that's the name of their first song. They spelt it wrong. [laughs] They spelt it like ■ girl's name, Endonisha. [laughs]

Nardwuar: And Snoop Doggy Dogg, speaking of early appearances, what can you tell the people about Low Profile?

[Nardwuar shows an LP to Snoop.]

Snoop Dogg: Low Profile, DJ Aladdin, Dub C, Crazy Tools, was in it, *Pay Ya Dues*, ain't nothing going on but a funky song. Man, they was the shit.

Nardwuar: From '89?

Snoop Dogg: Yeah, that's the year I graduated, so, you know, *Pay Ya Dues* was a hot record. Ice-T put him on. [singing] "Thanks to Ice-T / I got my foot in the door / When I'm going to rock this motherfucker until I can't no more / we pay dues."

Nardwuar: Schnoop Doggy Dogg, did Bushwick Bill show you blunts?

Snoop Dogg: Bushwick Bill was the first person to smoke ■ blunt with me. He was the first person to actually split open a Philly and uncut it, and then fill it back up with chronic and smoke it with us. We had never seen that before.

Nardwuar: Schnoop Doggy Dogg, winding up here, you have a doll, but I've really never



STEVE THUESON

Nardwuar: Winding up here, Snoop Doggy Dogg, is it true Big Boy has a dog shampoo?

Snoop Dogg: I never used it. Oh, a shampoo for real dogs?

asked you or shown you the Master P doll.
[Nardwuar shows a Master P doll to Snoop.]

Snoop Dogg: Uhhh! [squeezes doll]

Nardwuar: Exactly.

Snoop Dogg: Uhhh! This is the Master P doll.

Nardwuar: What do you think about the quality of that doll compared to the dolls you have?

Snoop Dogg: This is dope because it stood the test of the time. This doll is damn near twenty-something years old, and he still looks good. Uhhh, you hear me.

Nardwuar: Master P, Schnoop Doggy Dogg, really put you on big time, like he helped you out a lot. What can you tell the people about this particular compilation right here, *West Coast Bad Boyz* featuring Snoop Doggy...?

[Nardwuar shows an LP to Snoop.]

Snoop Dogg: ...Dogg.

Nardwuar: Dogg.

Snoop Dogg: I had a song on there [singing], "Pop like you're with my Rolls Royce, Cadillac, Lincoln and Mercedes Benz / pop like we're at the Howard Johnson, Sheraton, pop like we're at the Holiday Inn / it's that West Coast way we're livin' / money, cars, bitches / it's that West

Coast way we livin' / mmmm mmmmmmm mmmmmmm mmmmmmm"

Nardwuar: And you are Snoop Doggy...

Snoop Dogg: Dogg.

Nardwuar: Winding up here, Snoop Doggy Dogg, is it true Big Boy has a dog shampoo?

Snoop Dogg: Never knew about it. He does? **Nardwuar:** Yeah.

Snoop Dogg: I never used it.

Nardwuar: What do you think about that? A dog shampoo, a shampoo for dogs?

Snoop Dogg: Oh, a shampoo for real dogs? Oh, that may be cool, you know. I like my dogs to smell fresh when they are around me, you know. We out in public, so I may have to try that out.

Nardwuar: Have you ever thought about that? Like dog line, dog products, because I know you had mentioned that before.

Snoop Dogg: You just spun my spidey senses to create some dog products, [sings] Snoop Dogg pet products, maybe some shampoo.

Nardwuar: Because you are Snoop Doggy...

Snoop Dogg: Dogg.

Nardwuar: Well, thanks very much, Snoop Dog. Anything you want to tell the people out there at all?

Snoop Dogg: Wherever you get your outfits from, it has to be the best store in Canada. I love your shirts, your pants, your hats. It is so '70s game show. It's like you could be on *Let's Make a Deal* or *Price Is Right* when Bob Barker was the host, *Newlywed Game* with Bob Eubanks, or the *\$25,000 Pyramid* with Dick Clark, you know? You just, you're doing it man. This shit is, I mean, it's psychedelic, man. I mean it's sci-fi, wide screen, you know, futuristic thinking.

Nardwuar: Well thank you for the kind words, Snoop Doggy Dogg. That [sings] a lot.

Snoop Dogg: Man, I'm telling you like it is and not like it was, man. You a fashion statement, Nardwuar, and don't believe it when they say you're not, 'cause you are.

Nardwuar: Well thank you very much Snoop Doggy Dogg, keep on rocking in the free world and doot doola doot doo...

Snoop Dogg: Doot doo.

Listen and hear this interview at nardwuar.com/



Getting
accustomed to
bizarre-luxury
on the cheap.

Everything Wants to Thank You

It's my third time touring in Japan. As soon as I'm inside the Itami Airport, I perform what is now a tradition: I visit the nearest ladies' room and take a picture of the toilet. It's a celebration of one of the many things I love about this place. A Japanese toilet sums up the entire notion of making a mundane interaction as pleasant and elegant as possible, and in this case, there's an element of techno-efficiency that borders on the realm of sci-fi. The control panel on the side of the unit—a cluster of buttons covered with kanji and curious hieroglyphs (is that supposed to be a butt?)—is there to provide the weary traveler with options such as a heated seat, bidet service, and music. I imagine that should a shortage of TP occur, it will be swiftly remedied by a discreet robot butler summoned by a button I haven't figured out yet.

Many others have come to Japan as foreigners and reported on its virtuosic level of charming weirdness: maid cafés, robotic road construction safety guys, underwear vending machines, and the overwhelming Hello Kittyfication of an entire culture. But each time I've gone, my perception gets hooked on a couple of pervasive things.

On this trip, Paul and I had the foresight to reserve a hotel room well in advance for the night we arrived. It was ridiculously cheap but the reviews were all decent, although they kept using the term "love hotel," conjuring up the image of a seedy no-tell joint. "What the hell," we said. "It's just for one night and we'll be so exhausted it won't matter."

We were sure our driver had misunderstood when we got to the place. Instead of a low rent tenement-style block, he brought us to a sprawling white building surrounded by fancy lanterns and palm trees. Everything that wasn't white stucco was gilded. It didn't look a damned thing like a forty-three-dollar-a-night place. As we entered the door, a soothing recorded female voice welcomed us with "Irasshaimase!" and I remembered: I was in the land of the talking everything.

At least it seems like everything: automatic doors, toll booths, cash registers—even as a live human stands by and says the same thing, the omnipresent disembodied hyper-polite female voice always has the last word, making your brief interaction with the terrifying automated future-world is happy and rewarding. After a few days, I

got so used to it that I didn't even notice it anymore, although every once in a while I wondered if she was saying things like, "Now is the time to bow to your robot overlords."

The trains talk. The buses talk. The taxis talk. The elevators and crosswalks talk. And so do the people, at least in their professional capacity. Being raised as an ethnic variety of Catholic, I was born feeling guilty and—despite turning my back on my ecumenical roots—have remained in a constant state of apology for over four decades. This results in an awkward dance of face-saving whenever I entered a Japanese store. Even at a 7-Eleven, the greeting from staff member to customer is so prolonged that it's capable of making me feel awful for spending only ¥200 on an unidentifiable pastry ("donut filled with curry" comes to mind). While my Japanese friends basically ignore the employee, I overcompensated, thanking the hapless cashier with a formal expression of gratitude for taking my money and giving me the correct change. Meanwhile, my fancy "thank you" possibly conveyed that the greeting given by the employee was insufficient in its goal of making the customer feel superior, so that employee needs to be even more deferential to the clueless foreigner, who then adds hapless English "thank you's" onto her overblown *arigatou gozaimasu*.

I never realized being too polite could be the wrong decision, but according to my friends who live there, it's actually a thing. I eventually learned to throw out a casual "domo" after collecting my change, but still fought the urge to go back in and tell the employee how rewarding our transaction was and how much better it was than the type of treatment I receive from the garden-variety surly teenagers who usually perform the jobs back home. Jaded expats have compared this institutional level of politeness to "Southern charm" or "Minnesota nice," as if behind every cheerful expression of respect and gratitude lurks sneering contempt. But I'm just not buying it. Let me have this one bit of naiveté about peoples' intentions. Plus, it really freaks me out to think that every machine and appliance that talks to me is actually practicing a type of weaponized passive-aggressive behavior and perhaps that elevator door really does hate my guts.

And so: back to the love hotel.

The inside of the place made it look like the designers were going for an "Asian

Restaurant in the Vatican" theme, but there was no lobby to speak of: just a narrow room with a concierge desk and a large framed sign listing the types of rooms and the rates per hour. The piped-in music was loud, sounded remarkably like the American lounge singer in *Lost in Translation*, and continued even after the elevator welcomed us in and announced our floor. Small neon signs hung over each doorway, designating room numbers and vacancy. The music somehow seemed louder up the third floor. We opened the door to our spot with the oddly analog brass key and were greeted by a giant, festively lit room dominated by a bed, a huge flat-screen television, and a massage chair. There was a karaoke setup with two mics. There was a slot machine. There was a large fridge and next to it, a small vending machine that supplied the guest with any number of marital aids and, inexplicably, a can of Pringles. Opening the room door activated the lights and, even weirder, the music. A synthesized chiming chord progression that Paul identified as Em-Bm-G-A repeated itself until we started to feel legitimately crazy as we failed to figure out how to silence it after the magic wore off (about two minutes in). Perhaps I'm insufficiently experienced to say this, but at the moment, that room was possibly the Most Japanese Thing Ever and I decided that I never wanted to leave.

We secured the room for our remaining two nights in Osaka and in that compressed-time sort of thing that happens when touring, it started to feel like home ("Could you turn off the slot machine when you go to bed, please?") right at the time we had to depart. But it was probably for the best: getting accustomed to such bizarre-luxury on the cheap would only make the inevitable tiny hostels and bedrolls-on-the-floor a little harder to take for the rest of our travels, which took us from Osaka, through Tokyo, up north to Sendai and Akita, and back to Tokyo again for our final show.

We were lucky enough to have three nights in Tokyo, one of which was a solo gig for Paul at the infamous Poor Cow, a bar in the Shimokitazawa district owned by Fifi, formerly of Teengenerate and currently singing with The Tweepers, who joined us on the last night of our tour. Fifi's place is a remarkable little spot where the walls are lined with countless LPs and the atmosphere is one of effortless cool.



SIMON SOTELO

I never realized being too polite could be the wrong decision.

Live performances there are fairly rare and are usually restricted to a singer/songwriter format. Attending one is basically the same thing as sitting in your coolest friend's living room and listening to one of his coolest friends play a few tunes. The last time we visited Poor Cow was in 2013. We stayed until dawn, drinking shochu and beer and listening to an increasingly obscure and amazing playlist inspired by friendly tangential arguments that are inevitable and universal among musicians shooting the shit. It's just that kind of place.

The only downside to Poor Cow is the distance to so many of the venues we visited in Japan: the stairs. Although we played a few subterranean rooms with only a short flight of steps down, we visited many more that required us to climb several stories, guitars and merch bags in hand. One of the best things about touring Japan is that a backline is provided at every club, so we spared the horror of lugging a bass cab and drum kit everywhere we went. Even so, our inherent American laziness oozed up to the surface whenever we arrived at a place only to see the dreaded "3F" next to its name on the building.

I understand that due to population density in the cities everything tends to be piled on top of everything else, and that

vertical space is used as much as possible, even on a micro-level in the hostel rooms. But theory doesn't make the breathless, sweaty ascent to the club any easier. It also doesn't diminish my concern on the trip back down several hours and many beverages later. A repeated statement every time we left a club we'd just ruled like drunken gods only to pick our way down like tipsy mountain goats was, "They'd never be able to do this in the States! They'd get sued out of existence!" And yet we never stumbled during our three weeks there, although I'm sure if we stayed long enough it would have happened. It was as if we had tapped into some superpower or had mastered a Zen-like state just through osmosis. When I tell those who ask about our repeated tours there that "Japan made me a better person," this is actually what I'm referring to, but don't tell anyone.

There was so much to see and hear in the cities, from the love hotel, to the crazy after-parties in Hamamatsu and Niigata, to the manic visual and audio assault of Shinjuku on a weekend night. It would be easy to remember Japan as a clamor of open kitchens, karaoke, pachinko parlors, and talking buildings.

But there was one day when we were driving from Akita when the route took us

on a winding two lane highway parallel to the Sea of Japan. It looked exactly like every Japanese depiction of the ocean I'd ever seen. Even the strange pine trees and thin clouds seemed to have been drawn there by some elegant hand. I couldn't take my eyes off it. We stopped for a minute. I crossed the empty highway and stood at the seawall. The waves came in fast, shattering on the breakers. The only tranquil thing about them was their gorgeous aquamarine color, so different than the somber grayish blue of the Atlantic back home. I looked down the thin margin of beach on each side. There was no one there. There was no sound except the roar of the waves throwing itself on the rocks, no light except for the pale sun fighting the thin cloud cover. I breathed in the salt air and realized how much I craved the quiet, how lucky I was to even be there, finally alone for a moment with Japan.

Aki called to me from across the road. I turned back for one more look at the sea. "Arigatou gozaimasu," I said, and bowed to the waves.

They bowed back.

—J.V. McDonough



For the 100th print issue of *Razorcake*, I wanted to do a photographic tie-in to the first issue, which came out in 2001. I did not have any photos on hand of the bands that were featured in Issue #1, so I chose a photo of a band that is important to me from the same time period that *Razorcake* started.

This photo is of Tragedy on their first tour through Richmond in 2001. This show was so long ago and it almost seems odd to remember Tragedy as a new band. I kinda feel like Tragedy has been in my life forever—from the first EP on through to the last album. Tragedy has and will continue to be an all-time favorite for me. They have been a baseline staple, one that I will do whatever I have to in order to see them play live. I've seen them countless times and will go out of my way to do so again next time they hit the road. As far as contemporaries go, Tragedy are it!

Happy 100 issues *Razorcake*. I hope you keep publishing for another sixteen years! And I hope that I'm still able to see and photograph Tragedy for *Razorcake* #200!

—Chris Boarts Larson
slugandlettuce.net
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Chris Boarts Larson Photo Column - Tragedy

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Tragedy at Wiljers, KVA - January 31, 2001

ONE PUNK'S

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PYNCHON

NOVELS

Written by Sean Carswell

Layout by Todd Taylor

Illustrated by Brad Beshaw

1 I stole my first copy of a Thomas Pynchon novel. I was at a flea market in the student union of Florida State University, the summer of 1991. I saw a battered copy of *The Crying of Lot 49*. The front cover would need tape to survive another reading. The margins were littered with the type of comments an undergrad writes while taking notes in class, wondering if this shit will be on the test. The price: 45¢. I read the first line of the book at the stand:

One summer afternoon Mrs. Oedipa Maas came home from a Tupperware party whose hostess had put perhaps too much kirsch in the fondue to find that she, Oedipa, had been named executor, or she supposed executrix, of the estate of William Pierce Inverarity, a California real estate mogul who had once lost two million dollars in his spare time but still had assets numerous and tangled enough to make the job of sorting it all out more than honorary.

What? Kirsch in the fondue? Housewives getting drunk off spiked cheese? Correcting executor to executrix? Is executrix a real word? (It is). A novel about divvying up assets with this much energy and madness in a sentence? I was sold. Only, this was a time in my life when 45¢ was a little more change than I could spare. I intended to put the book back and check it out from the library, which was on the way home anyway. The guy who ran the book stand said something smart ass to me. I nodded, put the book down, and flipped through another box until he turned his head. I slid the book into the pocket of my plaid bermudas and headed home.

The next several hours were spent reading the book without a break. It's so complex, with so many characters and plot threads to keep in mind, and so many scenes that make you stop and say, "Wait, did I just read that?" I felt like, if I put it down, I'd forget the one key piece of information I needed to make sense of this madness. It was sometime around 2 AM when I got to the end. I realized that I'd forgotten or lost track of several key pieces of information. This novel, like life itself, was too massive to wrap up tightly at the end. It's full of loose threads, leads unpursued, roads not taken, cul-de-sacs, and the overriding sense that there's something bigger—maybe more sinister than we can or want to imagine—out there, playing us like we're monkeys in front of an organ grinder's piano.

This is the first great thing about a Thomas Pynchon novel: it invites us to a life with more complexity. The world around us is chaos in the purest sense. If we get even a little philosophical, we see that we understand less than a tiny fraction of nature, life, meaning, language, societies, cultures, and ourselves. We construct narratives to make this tiny fraction of understanding a bigger, more unified, to help us forget that what we know is a small drop in the giant sea of what we don't. It's scary to get beyond our narratives and dip our toes in the unknown. Pynchon helps us with that. His novels lead us up to that giant of the unknown. They slide our shoes off and seduce us. "Go on," they say. "It's just a toe. Dip it."

I was excited when I finished *The Crying of Lot 49* that I crashed into my roommate's room to tell him about it. Luckily he was alone in there. Awake. Not jerking off. He let me tell him about what I'd just read. Thank god he did. I had to put my thoughts into words or I never would've been able to sleep. I was so stoked by the book that he got inspired. The next morning, he started in on *The Crying of Lot 49*. He gave up after the first page.

This is the second thing about a Pynchon novel: it's not for everyone.

2 Since my first encounter with *The Crying of Lot 49* more than a quarter of a century ago, Pynchon's novels have been for me. I've read all of them several times. The two topics I've written about most in my adult life are punk rock and Pynchon novels. On the punk side, I wrote a column for the first ninety issues of this zine. Before that, I wrote for *Flipside* for five years. I've churned out literally thousands of band interviews, record reviews, and essays for zines. During that same time, I've written articles on Pynchon's works for some of the most prestigious academic journals in the U.S. and U.K. I've given papers at international Pynchon conferences in France and England. I spent eight years writing a monograph—a single-

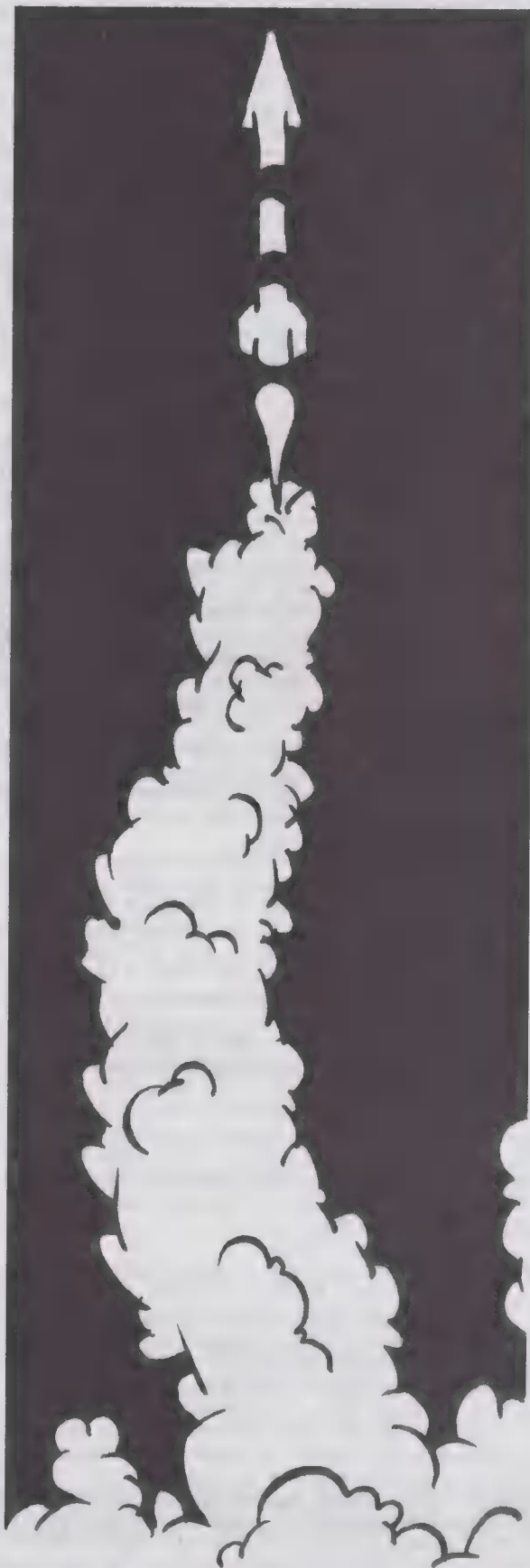
authored academic text—on Pynchon's conception of global power and resistance to that power. The book is called *Occupy Pynchon*. It's the deepest I've dipped my toes into that giant sea of the unknown. It's the most significant work I've done in my life. *Occupy Pynchon* came out in May 2017. The whole time I was writing it, Todd was asking me to do a One Punk's Guide to Pynchon. I'm finally acquiescing.

Pynchon for punk rockers is tough. First, I think most punk rockers would like Pynchon's novels. They charge at you going one hundred MPH. You have to learn how to experience them, how to pick meaning out of the madness. In that sense, reading Pynchon is like listening to a hardcore record. Pynchon's works are full of dick and fart jokes, silly puns, stupid names, and radical politics, just like a lot of the punk rock albums I have. And, in some large categories—community building, anarchist DIY leanings, art that rejects global consumer capitalism—what makes Pynchon's novels and punk rock great is similar. But let's be clear. Thomas Pynchon is no punk rocker. In fact, he is part of one group that, until the mid-nineties, was punk rock's mortal enemies: hippies. He's also part of another group that still is punk rock's moral enemy: rich people.

Thomas Pynchon was born in 1937 in New York. His father was an upper middle-class guy, an industrial surveyor and, for a year, city supervisor of Oyster Bay, New York. Pynchon attended Cornell University for two years, joined the Navy, then returned to Cornell, where he graduated in 1959. His Ivy League connections helped him get his early work published. One of his professors introduced his work to Nobel Prize-winning author Saul Bellow, who published one of Pynchon's first short stories. These publications allowed him to secure the services of one of New York's most powerful agents, Candida Donadio. Donadio also represented Joseph Heller (*Catch-22*) and Mario Puzo (*The Godfather*). In the seventies, Donadio reportedly scored Pynchon a million-dollar advance on a two-book deal. Around that time, one of Donadio's employees, Melanie Jackson, convinced Pynchon to jump ship and join her new agency. Sometime in the early eighties, Pynchon and Jackson married. Now, Jackson is a heavy-hitter in publishing, representing boring, painfully bourgeois authors like Rick Moody and Lorrie Moore. At one point in Pynchon's *Inherent Vice*, a wealthy and sinister character explains to the protagonist that the most important thing to maintaining wealth and power is "being in place." Pynchon is firmly in place.

He's widely viewed as a recluse because he doesn't do interviews, allow himself to be photographed, or give public appearances. This has led to rumors that he's really J. D. Salinger or the Unabomber or whomever. The rumors can be fun, but they ignore the fact that a lot is known about the guy. He lives on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. He goes out to lunch with writers like Don DeLillo and Salman Rushdie. He did two guest appearances on *The Simpsons*. A few people who've met him have written about him, most notably Jules Siegel in an article titled "Who Is Thomas Pynchon... And Why Did He Take Off With My Wife?", which was in a 1977 issue of *Playboy*, and Andrew Gordon in his essay "Smoking Dope with Thomas Pynchon," which was included in the collection *The Vineland Papers*. In these two works we find out that Pynchon did, indeed, take off with Siegel's wife and smoke dope with Andrew Gordon. All the biographical information on Pynchon amounts to this: he's a guy who writes books. The books seem to be the most interesting thing about his life. Let's focus on them.

3 Pynchon's first novel is *V*. It came out in 1963, when Pynchon was twenty-five. It won the William Faulkner Foundation Award and was a huge critical and commercial success. It tells the story, first, of Benny Profane, a recently discharged sailor who's cultivating the life of a human yo-yo. He bounces around from job to job and place to place, sleeping on couches, hanging out with a bunch of bohemians who call themselves the Whole Sick Crew, and delving into relationships with various women who want to save his lost and doughy ass. From all I can gather, Profane modeled after Pynchon himself. Pynchon also yo-yoed around New York and the northeast corridor, hanging out with old Navy and college buddies, one even named Pig Bodine like a character in *V* (and, later, *Gravity's Rainbow*). Friends of Pynchon from the late '50s and early '60s even referred to their group as the Whole Sick Crew. The most entertaining



parts of the Benny Profane sections of *V.*, though, ■■■ the ones that deviate from autobiography. For instance, Profane spends ■ chapter hunting alligators in the sewers under Manhattan. While underground, he discovers a shrine for (and subsequently reveals the history of) ■ patron saint of ■■■ rats. It's strange and funny and philosophical.

If the novel alone were just about a dude in his early twenties wandering around lost and getting drunk with his buddies, it would probably be long out of print and forgotten. What makes *V.* special and sets Pynchon apart from his contemporaries are the alternating sections in which the other protagonist, Herbert Stencil, searches for the mysterious V. V. is ■ manifestation of the old White Goddess myths and perhaps ■ spy who tangled with Stencil's father. His search for V. takes the novel through Egypt, South Africa, and various points in Europe. What Stencil can reconstruct of her movements and her possible life allows readers to venture into the upper echelons of power and colonialism that led to the first World War. Eventually, Profane and Stencil team up and plan to travel to Malta, where they try to solve the mystery of V. I'm not spoiling anything to tell you that the mystery is bigger than the novel. In my five or six readings of *V.*, I've learned ■■ incredible amount about global power, capitalism, psychology, jazz, art, apartheid, and slavery, but I'm still not quite ■■■ who V. really is or if she's really just one person.

I first read *V.* when I was twenty-four, right around the age Pynchon was when he wrote it. I was living in Atlanta and wrapping up the first draft of my first novel, *Drinks for the Little Guy*. Coincidentally, I had characters like Profane and the Whole Sick Crew. I had the lost and drunk dude in his early twenties, ■ mostly autobiographical portrait. After reading *V.*, I felt like I had to make my novel bigger, tie it into global politics, go into the speculative realms of alligator hunting and patron saints of sewer rats. I spent a year trying and failing to do that. ■ finally gave up and made the novel the book I'd set out to write. Pynchon had already written *V.* I didn't need to be some kind of referential wannabe.

His other sixties novel is *The Crying of Lot 49*. As I've said before, I started this one that follows Oedipa Maas ■ she tries to execute a real estate mogul's will. Doing so, Oedipa stumbles across the Tristero, which may be ■ massive conspiracy, a massive practical joke, or a look inside her own insanity. It's ■ short book, but it has enough room to include a satirical Jacobean play, a Beatlemania band called the Paranoids, several goofy songs (only one or two of which are Paranoids originals), right wing fringe groups, and ■ perhaps centuries-old postal underground.

Most people who want to read Pynchon start with *The Crying of Lot 49*. It is, after all, the shortest. It's also one of the most difficult. When I was writing my dissertation on Pynchon, my dissertation director, who'd read several Pynchon novels and is ■ brilliant scholar, asked me if I could explain *The Crying of Lot 49* to him. He said, "That's the one book I can't get my head around."

Him and everyone. When I got into Pynchon, there were only four novels to choose from (and only one that could fit into the pocket of my bermudas). Since then, Pynchon has written four more novels, all of them easier to read than *The Crying of Lot 49*. I'll say it here and again later: if you're unsure about Pynchon, start with *Inherent Vice*. It's not very intimidating, and it's a lot of fun.

4 Pynchon followed *The Crying of Lot 49* with *Gravity's Rainbow* in 1973. If you've heard of Pynchon, this is probably the novel you've heard of. Many consider *Gravity's Rainbow* to be Pynchon's masterpiece. It won the 1974 National Book Award. Pynchon, who long shunned the public eye, refused to attend the ceremony honoring him. His publisher sent comedian Irwin Corey instead. Corey delivered a bizarrely funny monologue accepting the award. He ■■■ identified himself, and many in the crowd, having never seen a picture of Pynchon and knowing the book to be bizarrely funny, thought the comedian was the author. As you might expect, this pissed off ■ lot of literary types. The judges for the Pulitzer committee also selected *Gravity's Rainbow* for the 1974 prize, but the advisory committee decided they'd rather not give the award that year than give the award to this book they called obscene. The Irwin Corey episode is probably the reason why Pynchon, who is widely regarded ■ the greatest living writer, has never won the Nobel Prize for literature.

Gravity's Rainbow's plot, if it can be said to have a plot, follows American lieutenant Tyrone Slothrop through the final days of World War II. British military intelligence has discovered a correlation between Slothrop's erections and the German V-2 rocket, which is bombing the shit out of London. Hijinks ensue. I really don't want to summarize it better than that. It's a book that rejects any simple characterizations. It has everything you can imagine and more. Kazoo choruses. Pavlovian-trained octopi. Coprophagia. Séances. Pig superheroes. Hash on Harry Truman's windowsill. Custard pie fights. Love. Sex. War. More than you ever thought you wanted to know about rocket bombs. It's part spy novel, part war novel, part thought experiment, part history, part whimsy, and, overall, an exploration of humanity's hard-on for its own final destruction.

I read *Gravity's Rainbow* for the first time when I was twenty-five. My fellow Razorcaker, Jim Ruland, read it at the same time. We'd get together and smoke weed and drink beer and try to make sense of what we just read. Even factoring in all the beer and weed, I came out of my reading experience smarter than I started. More than that. There was a version of me that existed before reading *Gravity's Rainbow* and a second version of me after reading it. A paradigm shifted. I became not just a person, but a person connected to history and global power, a person able to think in real ways about what it meant to be alive at the end of the twentieth century.

I wouldn't recommend starting with *Gravity's Rainbow*. Again, start with *Inherent Vice*. But set aside two months between now and death to read this book. The sooner, the better. And, if you're like

Political discussions started to include terms like "deregulation" and "big government" and "free market," all empty signifiers, words that mean nothing. Those in power didn't believe in actually taking away regulations or making the market free or shrinking the overall size of government. They instead wanted to change regulations to favor a small network of wealthy individuals at the head of multinational corporations, national governments, and supranational agencies like the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank. The role of government, according to those in this network, should be to improve the lives of those in this network. This ideology, as a whole, goes by the name "neoliberalism." It's a new form of economic liberalism, which was first championed by Adam Smith in *The Wealth of Nations*. Unlike Adam Smith, who actually believed in free markets, neoliberals simply used the terms and concepts of economic liberalism as a sales pitch for funneling money upward.

Pynchon tapped into this power shift immediately. The real genius of *Vineland* is Pynchon's ability to formulate a resistance to the neoliberal revolution a decade before small groups of people started working against it at the WTO protests in Seattle in 1999, two decades before Joseph Stiglitz and the Occupy Movement came up with the term "the 1%." *Vineland* isn't intellectually light or a regression from *Gravity's Rainbow*. Instead, Pynchon was exploring how working and middle class Americans were getting fucked by big business and governments just as the real fucking was beginning. Now that we're living in the third decade of this fucking, the novel's brilliance shines brighter.

The first great thing about a Thomas Pynchon novel:
it invites us to see life with more complexity.

The second thing about a Pynchon novel:
it's not for everyone.

me, you'll go back and read it again every few years. So far, it's been better with each read.

5 After *Gravity's Rainbow*, Pynchon didn't publish another novel for seventeen years. In 1984, he released a short story collection, *Slow Learner*. In the introduction, Pynchon disparages the stories in the collection. Part of that is false humility. Part of it is honesty. It's not a great book. The stories were all written while he was in college. They read like they were written by a kid in college. A brilliant kid, but a kid. If you're getting into Pynchon, *Slow Learner* is a good book to read after you've read everything else.

The first novel after *Gravity's Rainbow* is *Vineland*, which came out in 1990. On the surface, *Vineland* is much simpler than *Gravity's Rainbow*. *Gravity's Rainbow* is encyclopedic. It has everything from dodo hunting to rocket science in it. Reading it is a journey. *Vineland* takes on television, pop culture, and the legacy of sixties activism in Reagan's America. Critics and fans who wanted *Gravity's Rainbow 2*, attacked and dismissed *Vineland*.

I totally disagree with that.

In the seventeen years between these two novels, something happened in the world. We don't talk about it as such, but a revolution occurred. It left us all on the losing side. With the election of Ronald Reagan in the U.S. and Margaret Thatcher in the U.K., with the rise of Deng Xiaoping in China and Paul Volcker as the chair of the Federal Reserve, global power began to shift. Behind this was an ideological shift. For the first time in human history, huge masses of people began to believe that life should be about accumulating consumer goods. Gain, wealth, and money came to supplant meaning. The concerns of the marketplace became societies' primary concern.

I should also say, it's a fun book with great characters. There's a Japanese monster movie scene, a mountain retreat full of feminist ninjas, a radical film collective, old hippies and new punk rockers, and even some Wobblies still hanging around. It's also the first time Pynchon really learned how to end a novel. The ending of *Vineland* is worth the price of admission, even if you want to ignore all the neoliberal stuff I just talked about.

6 In 1997, Pynchon published his second encyclopedic novel, *Mason & Dixon*. As the title indicates, the novel is about Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon, the astronomer and surveyor who drew the boundary between Pennsylvania and Maryland known as the Mason-Dixon line. It follows Mason and Dixon's adventures first to South Africa, where they charted the 1761 Transit of Venus (when Venus is visible passing across the surface of the sun, charting it was used at the time to determine the exact shape of the Earth). They're then sent to the United States to reconcile this impossible border which came to designate the divide between free and slave states. Dixon—who in real life was a Quaker and ardently anti-slavery—became the namesake of Dixie, the slave states. The novel follows the characters until their respective deaths after the Revolutionary War.

Mason & Dixon is my favorite Pynchon novel. It blends the styles of early American literature that I love: the gothic novels, the captivity narratives, the historical romances that were prevalent from just before the revolution to just before the Civil War. Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon are the most realized of Pynchon's characters. The end of the book, with Mason and his sons, just might bring tears to your eyes. And what Pynchon does with this period is as funny as it is poignant. Mason and Dixon smoke weed with George Washington.

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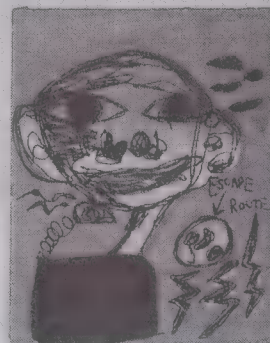
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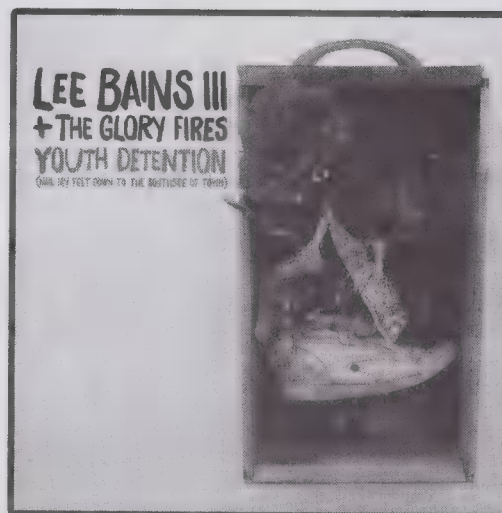
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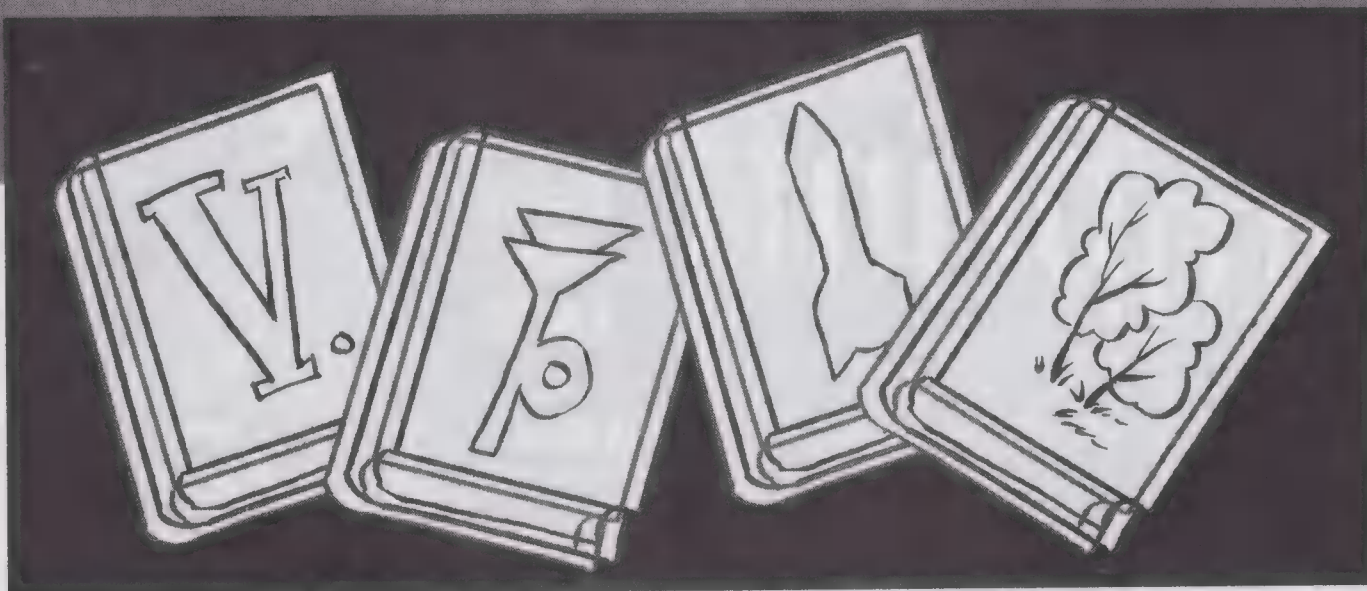
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Against the Day has the greatest definition of what it means to be an American that I've ever read: **"It means do what they tell you and take what they give you and don't go on strike or their soldiers will shoot you down."**

Ben Franklin helps them bargain down the price of opium. Thomas Jefferson plagiarizes a toast that Dixon raises. All this blends with the horrors that paved the way for our lives here: the genocide of Native Americans, the nation's wealth built on slavery.

Pynchon followed up *Mason & Dixon* in 2006 with the largest of his encyclopedic novels, *Against the Day*. *Against the Day* weighs in at nearly 1,100 pages of small type. Read it, and you've really done something. I once taught a course at my university on this book alone. Even though it was the only book we read all semester, even though we spent forty-five hours talking about it in class, even though I taught a great deal about the history and philosophy upon which the novel is based, the general consensus at the end of the semester was that we'd just scratched the surface. It's that rich of a book.

Against the Day spans the years from the Chicago World's Fair of 1893 through the years just after World War I. Most of the novel follows a family, the Traverses, and their journeys from Colorado mining country to the greater world. The family patriarch, Webb, is an anarchist bomber. After a plutocrat has Webb assassinated, his four children—Reef, Frank, Lake, and Kit—alternately become entwined with and revolt against the forces that led to their father's death. They become part of the build-up of the first World War. They fight in the Mexican Revolution. They study advanced mathematics, work in early Hollywood, travel to other dimensions, join anarchist collectives, spy for and against national governments, get stuck in Balkan civil wars, blow shit up, and a million other things. The novel reaches its climax in Ludlow, Colorado, where, in real life, John Rockefeller raised a private army and led a one-sided war against his employees. Pynchon breathes life back into this horrible and forgotten chapter in American history. Jesse Traverse, Reef's son, comes out of it with the greatest definition of what it means to be an American that I've ever read: "It means do what they tell you and take what they give you and don't go on strike or their soldiers will shoot you down."

Against the Day is my second favorite Pynchon novel. Just writing about it now makes me want to read it again.

Pynchon's two most recent novels are far less ambitious than the four from *Gravity's Rainbow* to *Against the Day*. In 2009, he came out with *Inherent Vice*, a detective novel set in 1970. Private eye Doc Sportello is hired to find a missing real estate mogul and solve the murder of the mogul's bodyguard. The investigation takes him into the lair of a sinister organization called the Golden Fang. In the novel, the Golden Fang is an excellent illustration of that networked power that came to be after the '80s neoliberal revolution. They're a vertically integrated heroin dealer, covering everything from the drug to the rehab centers and dental clinics that replace your teeth once the heroin leeches the calcium out of them. They're also tied to the FBI, Southern California land management, the U.S. military; power stretching up to Richard Nixon and over to Southeast Asia. To understand the Golden Fang is to understand the inextricable relationship between politics and money in the industrialized world. Doc does his best to wrap his mind around it.

Inherent Vice was the first Pynchon novel to be adapted into a film. In 2014, Paul Thomas Anderson directed his adaptation, starring Joaquin Phoenix, Owen Wilson, Josh Brolin, and Reese Witherspoon. It's a good movie. I enjoyed it. Everyone I know who watched it and hadn't read the book was thoroughly confused by the plot. I thought it was pretty easy to follow. My first reaction was, wow, Pynchon's simplest novel is simplified even more in a film adaptation and it's still too complex for most people. I taught *Inherent Vice* after the movie came out. I overheard two students talking before class. One said to the other, "Just read the book. It's way easier than the movie." I say, do both. Read the book, first. It's better if you don't see Doc as Joaquin Phoenix and Coy Harlingen as Owen Wilson in your head. It's best if

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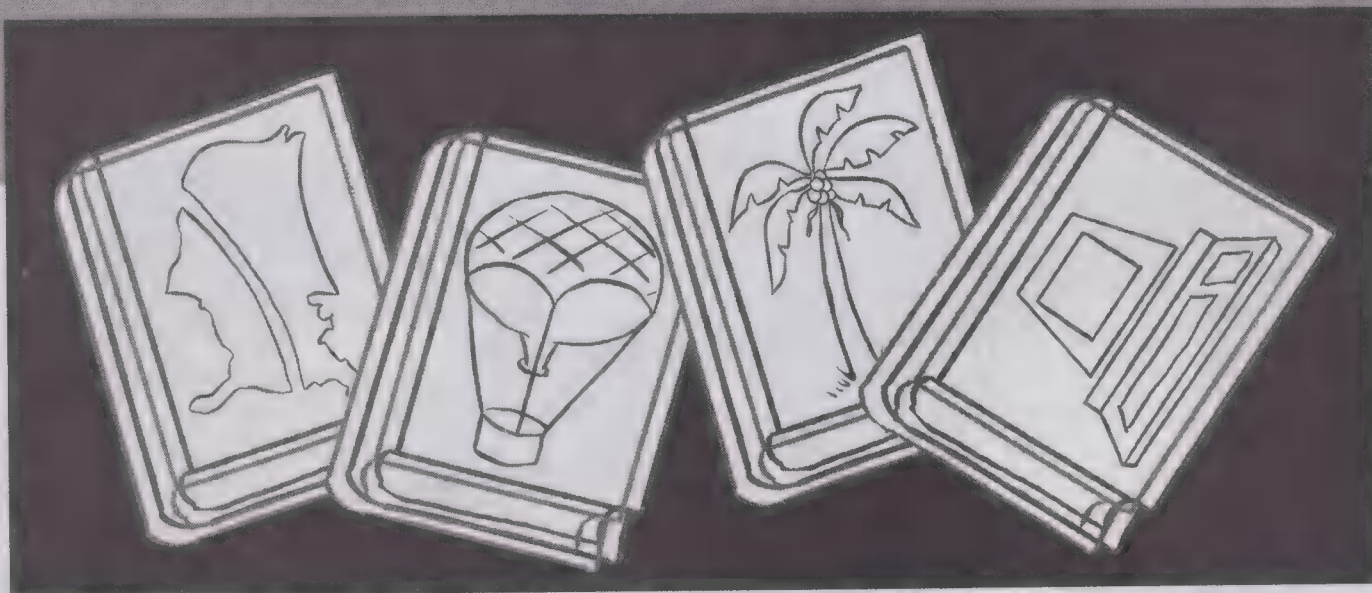
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Art that you get the first time you experience it is boring.
Art that confuses and frustrates and entertains and teaches and leaves you thinking and wanting to go back to it, well, that's the good stuff. That's what life is about.

you experience the complete Golden Fang and not the abridged movie version. Then see the movie and think of it as art inspired by art rather than a visual representation of the novel.

And, again, this is the Pynchon novel I recommend you start with. Unlike most of his works, *Inherent Vice* has one main character who is in every scene. It has a plot that you can follow (if you want to; it's more fun to me when I forget the mysteries we're supposed to be solving). You can get most of the allusions without having to look them up. Part of me thinks that Pynchon wrote this book as a gateway into his other novels, ■ way to get the feel of his works without overwhelming you.

Pynchon's latest novel (as of this writing) is *Bleeding Edge* (2013). It's another good one to start with for all the reasons I just listed. It follows fraud investigator Maxine Tarnow as she explores all the dirty dealings that characterize the beginning of the twenty-first century. There are global conspiracies, Bill Gates-style tech villains, underhanded real estate deals, vaguely criminal venture capitalists and stock brokers, and a battle for the soul of the internet. The novel takes place in Manhattan in 2001. Of course, the year includes the events of September 11. Pynchon gives various characters' various reactions to the events. They become folded into the larger issues of wealth and power.

I enjoyed *Bleeding Edge* quite a bit. I've read it three times already. I recommend it. Still, among Pynchon's eight novels, this one is the least impressive to me. At one point in *The Crying of Lot 49*, Oedipa Maas looks at ancient illustrations that the narrator describes as having been "executed with that crude haste to see the finished product that marks ■■ amateur." Pynchon is no amateur, and *Bleeding Edge* is still one of the best novels of the past five years, but it seems to be written with a crude haste. In his previous novels, Pynchon's research is spotless. In *Gravity's Rainbow*, he gives actual physics equations from actual German textbooks teaching rocket science, and

he ■■■ them as poignant metaphors. In *Against the Day*, he explores fourth-dimensional mathematics in ways that are mathematically sound. But in *Bleeding Edge*, his representation of computer science is spotty. His fictionalization of the Ludlow Massacre in *Against the Day* casts American labor history into a new light. His representation of 9/11 in *Bleeding Edge* doesn't break any ground I haven't seen broken already. If this is his last book, I'll be a little disappointed.

8 Pynchon turned eighty this year. It remains to be seen whether he has something else up his sleeve. We know he tends to write more than one novel at a time. His personal letters show he worked on *Mason & Dixon* for more than twenty-five years. He wrote *The Crying of Lot 49* while deeply involved in *Gravity's Rainbow*. So there may be one more big, encyclopedic book before he slips off this mortal coil. And maybe there isn't. It's almost greedy to ask for more. His four novels, from *Gravity's Rainbow* to *Against the Day*, are four of the greatest books ever written. Even his lesser books ■■■ only lesser by Pynchon standards. They're still better than anything that came out this year. Eight great novels, man, that's one hell of a career. But as long as he's alive, I'm praying for number nine.

In the meantime, I recommend you give him a try. Pick any one and read it. Don't worry about "getting it." Art that you get the first time you experience it is boring. Art that confuses and frustrates and entertains and teaches and leaves you thinking and wanting to go back to it, well, that's the good stuff. That's what life is about. So go ahead. Dip your toe into the great unknown. You won't drown.



ERICA

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more

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FISCHER

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Erica Freas (she/her) fucking gets it. She knows when it's time to stand up and fight head on, and when it's time to step back and come in service to others. Playing solo, as well as in bands—RVIVR, SOMNIA, and Hot Tears—Erica has been and continues to be at the forefront of an ever-changing punk scene. Working to cultivate safer spaces at shows, bringing more representation of women and queers to punk, all the while making amazing music, Erica Freas is a seasoned yet refreshing voice. And she's fucking smart.

At thirty-five, self-proclaimed as “straddling” between older and younger generations, Erica has cultivated a deep compassion and a strong ability to see people where they're at, and attempt to meet them there. She's holistic, she's realistic, and she's self aware. She's not in it for ego, for status. She's in it to do her part.

Through her music, her performance, and her overall being, Erica stands her ground. She knows what she can do, and she does it. Well.

Barring jokes about young people and their phones, I met Erica by sending her a text and a selfie. Her impeccable sense of humor, spot-on observations, and her ability to see the complexities at play within art and culture became apparent within seconds of talking. Erica has great ideas and she expresses them without pretension. She speaks up and speaks her mind, but more importantly, she listens. Learning from others around her, using her platform to create dialogue, tirelessly contributing to making punk a more inclusive and celebratory community—the space Erica Freas makes is where punk should be going.

We sat down—she in her home of Olympia, and me in Chico, Calif.—to talk Mariah Carey, internalized misogyny, wigs, and social justice in punk.

Griffin: I'm sitting outside because my friend is watching *True Blood* inside.

Erica: Do you mind if I'm snacking?

Griffin: Not at all. What did you make?

Erica: Just frozen pot stickers.

Griffin: I'm excited. I haven't done my own *Razorcake* interview before, so it's a big day we eat here.

Erica: Pure business.

Griffin: We're the face of women in the workplace.

Erica: Do you want to dive in? I have friends in town and in the summer there's this thing called bio-luminescence here, where something biological in the water gets activated by heat and then when you're going swimming, it's like you're swimming through a galaxy. We have a date when I get off the phone with you.

Griffin: Can you say your name and the bands you play in and your pronouns?

Erica: My name is Erica Freas. I am she and her pronouns. I play as myself. I play in RVIVR. I play in a band called SOMNIA that's me and David Combs from Washington, D.C., and I play cello in Molly Fischer's project Hot Tears. That's my bio.

Griffin: Did you learn cello as a child or as an adult?

Erica: I taught myself how to play cello when I was twenty-one because I was in a black metal band called Threnos and we needed to go acoustic. I played bass, so I learned the cello so I could play the chord progressions acoustically. It was really pretty. I wasn't really good then, and I'm not very good now, but I'm proficient enough that it's fun. Are you in L.A.?

Griffin: No, I'm in Chico, Calif. I'm in the process of moving to Philadelphia, but a guy in a truck hit my car, and then the shop they were getting the parts they needed for my car burned down.

Erica: Oh my god.

Griffin: Isn't that horrific?

Erica: One time when I was on tour in Europe with RVIVR, we had a record getting pressed at a European plant. They expedited copies we'd have them for tour and then we were supposed to get more copies part way through tour. And then they just didn't show up. We were like, "Flakes! We need those records!" The plant had burned down. I felt the same way I see you feeling. That's epic—the manufacturing plant with all the manufacturing materials, gone.

Griffin: It puts your problems in perspective, but then you're also boned.

Erica: We needed those records, but in the end, they were way more fucked than we were.

Griffin: And there's always a backup at record plants, because there's not enough plants anymore. And all those machines are a trillion dollars.

Erica: Totally. Plus they're always saying shit like, "We destroyed the machines that make the machines that make the vinyl, so what we have is what we have on earth." It's at some point—probably soon if it hasn't happened already—some engineers, probably hipster engineers, are gonna make more.

Griffin: Well, fucking Record Store Day gets bigger and bigger and then they make more records, because the world needs more like—I don't even know what they put out on Record Store Day.

Erica: It's so fucked.

Griffin: Like a Beatles record?

Erica: They reprint old shit that already had forty million copies.

Griffin: None of us need this.

Erica: When I started Rumbletowne Records a decade ago, it was so chill. I definitely feel like I was part of the—whatever you want to call it—the building wave that we're at now with record production. But it feels like a decade ago was enough back that you could get a record turned around in time for your tour next month—an LP. Now it's six months. And Taylor Swift-style people weren't putting out vinyl—vinyl was dead.

Griffin: But now it's cool again.

Erica: Which I understand, because it is cool.

Griffin: I think Top 40 people get to be cool and listen to records, too, if they want that experience. Like, it is cool. Records are cool. I remember being thirteen and getting my first record player from my dad. It was so exciting. Of course I want other people to feel that, even if they're listening to shitty music.

Erica: I didn't buy my first record until I was like twenty-five.

Griffin: What was it?

Erica: It was a comp of Northwest punk bands. I can't even tell you who was on it.

Griffin: At least that's cool. My first record was a Cars album. A comp of Northwest punk is cool.

Erica: Yeah, you're right. It's underground. But, you know, my first piece of music was Mariah Carey MTV Unplugged. That is cool. The Northwest punk comp held my attention for a while, and then it didn't hold my attention anymore.

Griffin: Mariah Carey is forever.

Erica: Uh, yeah.

Griffin: My first CD was Beyoncé, *Dangerously in Love*.

Erica: That's fucking great.

Griffin: I had to go to the CD store.

Erica: Dude. Are there any more at all?

Griffin: Best Buy?

Erica: I dunno. They probably have a vinyl wall. They sell vinyl at Whole Foods. And Target. What is up with the world?

Griffin: I go back and forth with this too because I grew up near Boston, but I didn't do Boston music stuff in middle or high school. Most of my friends now grew up in Seattle or in L.A. and have always been doing real punk stuff. I remember my first Green Day shirt was from Target. I was like, eleven and I was so excited to mark myself in this way and feel this community, and now I'm like "Ah, fuck Target." But it was special, and it was my only resource for community that I knew at the time.

Erica: You hadn't learned any sort of capitalist critique or punk points critique yet about what was and wasn't cool. I grew up in Olympia, and I liked punk, but I liked

radio punk and I liked really dirty apolitical punk made by mostly white cis boys because I didn't know there was something else, and riot grrrl was happening literally in the same venues on different nights and I just didn't know about it. I'm gonna put a wig on. [Puts on wig.]

Griffin: [Points to wig.] The blonde is good.

Erica: Thank you. I got a couple wigs because I got so sick of having a bald head all the time; it grows out so slow. Have you ever shaved your head?

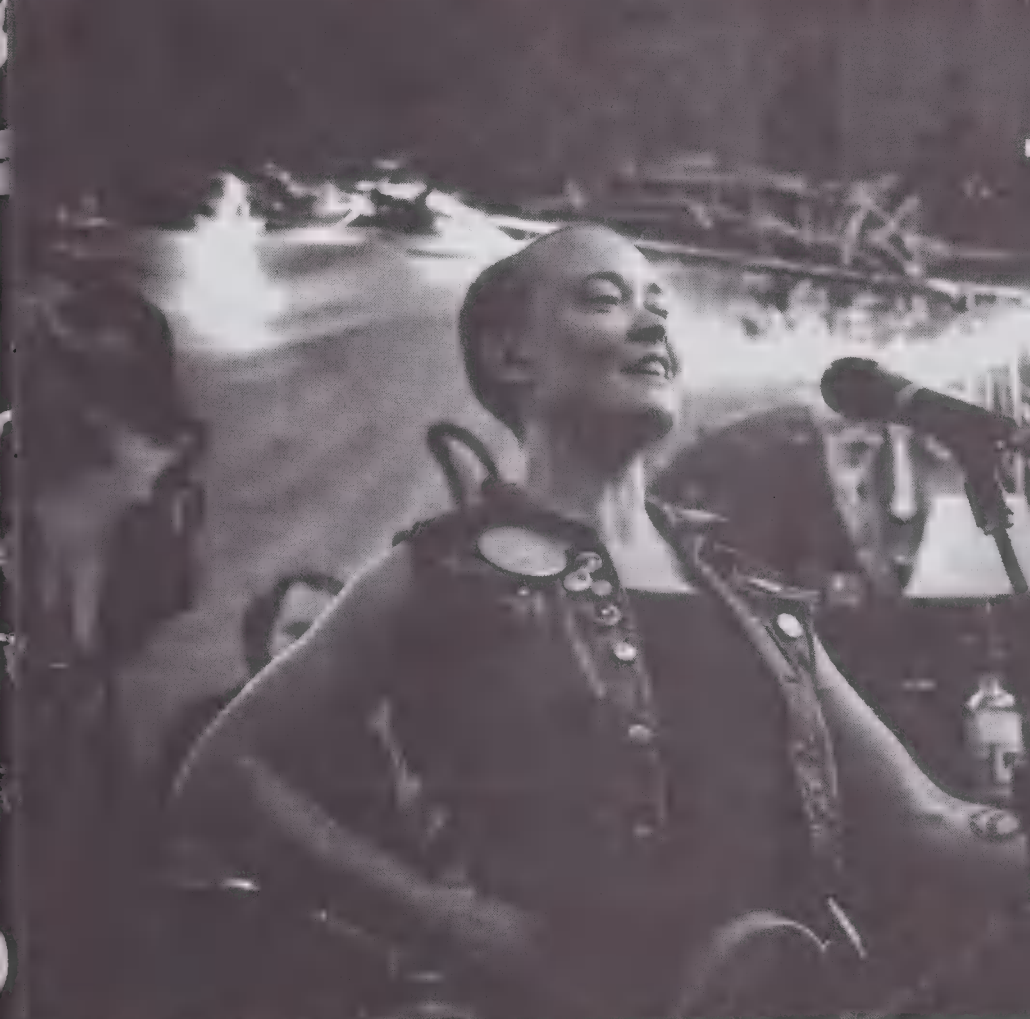
Griffin: Yeah a few times. I finally grew it. It's hard. Gender stuff is hard and then hair stuff is like, really crazy. I don't want to call it "responsibility"—and maybe you can give me words you use for it—but do you feel, as someone who is on stage—and I know that you talk at your shows about safer spaces, people's personal behavior, and cultivating safer spaces for inclusion at punk shows—do you feel a responsibility to do that?

Erica: I agree with you about the word responsibility, but I also don't know what another word for it is. Sometimes it feels like an obligation. I do feel—probably more than I should—I have created an event for people to come stand in a room together and I'm playing fast music in some of my bands, and I can see what's going on in the crowd—where if you're just standing in the crowd, you often can't.

I don't want somebody to get hurt. I don't want somebody to get sexually assaulted. I don't want somebody to get bullied out of the environment. And I have often thought about that for bands that play in really big places, like at a stadium show, you would have to absolutely just turn off your feeling of responsibility for that, because there's nothing you can do, if there are lights in your face and it's a big open space. I've had nightmares about that. What would you do? How would you cope?

We started talking about a show environment where people were paying more attention to each other and not hurting each other in RVIVR maybe six or seven years ago. Over the years I have felt a lot of really mixed things about the way that we have gone about saying it. Sometimes I felt like we've gotten better at saying it. Sometimes I feel like we've gotten worse, and a thing that I feel a lot lately is that I wish there was a way to take the power of the person holding the microphone and give it to whatever person in the crowd wanted to tap on whoever's shoulder, who was being violent and be like, "By the authority in me, I don't want you to act like that, I don't have to wait for the person on the mic to say it."

I know I do that at shows, if I'm just a participant and I see that there's somebody taking up a lot of violent space or annoying space, and there's people that aren't feeling comfortable, asking them to change their behavior. I don't mind doing it. I know that it's in my personality to feel okay, where a lot of people don't. But when we started, I was thinking about it through the lens of my identity, a relatively small-bodied cis woman,



IT'S WORTH IT IF
SOME
PEOPLE THINK
YOU'RE BEING
A BUMMER OR
"NOT COOL" IF
YOU FEEL LIKE
WHAT YOU ARE
STANDING FOR
IS A CULTURAL
SHIFT THAT IS
IMPORTANT TO
YOU

PHOTO BY JALIN WILDING

and was like, "I don't want to get smashed. So maybe other people who share identity with me don't want to get moshed into in a violent way. Maybe they want to occupy the front of the room."

What I have found, and the kind of feedback we have gotten with RVIVR so many times, is that it doesn't fall on gender lines and it doesn't fall on size lines. Sometimes the biggest man in the room is the one who's like, "Thaaaank you. People just use me like a back board on a basketball hoop," and they just want to enjoy the show without getting their body used or banged into in that way. So I have learned a lot from talking to the people at our shows. I feel ready for the culture to shift and for people to own the desire to keep these safer spaces safer without needing the person on the mic to advocate for it.

I also remember shows where we all used to dance a lot—and not in a violent way, in an enthusiastic beautiful way, that at times had really fun, ridiculous shit, like pyramids or the kind of crowd surfing that's participatory and not like you're trying to stomp on people. And I miss it. I feel like—and not just because of RVIVR, but because of the culture shift—we've been going in a direction where it's not okay to touch each other because we don't know how to do it in a way that feels good so everybody stays really still. I miss the energy of it feeling like a consensual bodies

moving thing, and I think about how we've contributed to a fear of touching each other. I look forward to getting past that fear to the next thing where we're able to establish consent and have a really good time, but it doesn't feel stiff and fearful.

Griffin: I think that's metaphorical too—the stiff physical movement at shows—for how people are finally being like, "I don't want to misgender someone. I don't want to offend someone." But also fear they're going to be judged if they say the wrong thing, or maybe they've never learned about racial justice or gender stuff so they kinda tiptoe around with their words. How do we make "accessibility" accessible?

Sometimes just saying the words, especially when talking to older cis punk dudes, who are lifers, and they've been doing this and sticking this to the man forever. I have experiences of me trying to be like, "Hey, why don't we consider this thing or that thing?" and they just kinda hear me saying to them, "Stop, you're wrong," or, "You're a bad person if you don't know these words."

Erica: Totally. I *loooooove* what you're describing—people who have grown up with a vocabulary and openness that is adaptable and willing to shift as we learn more, as opposed to people who are stuck in an understanding that comes from the culture that existed

during their developmental growth and who get defensive of change. I think the openness to adapting around peoples' identities is how we actually break the binaries. I'm thirty-five and I feel like I straddle these two groups. There are people not much older than me, and I see in my elders, a stiffness when trying to understand what this new way of thinking is, where there's space for people's identities to just really not fit into the boxes.

I feel like we're just in this liminal moment: the earth is so old and humanity is so old and we're talking about a span of like fifteen-twenty years where our understanding is changing rapidly. I don't know the answer. It's not really a question. I resonate whole heartedly with the scenario you described and I just wonder if time is what will help sort that out.

At the moment, there's a quality to the openness around pronouns and around all the varying ways that sexuality can take place that wasn't as loud before. We also have more vocabulary and openness around talking about racial justice and the areas where these both intersect and are influenced by class privilege, environmental destruction, rampant capitalism... we've really been cracking open how to truly talk about the hardest pieces of our divided societies.

I think that that adaptability piece of this upcoming generation is so important and it's

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HEAR THE MOST PAINFULLY
MISOGYNISTIC STUFF
FROM PEOPLE BEING LIKE,
"WOW, YOU'RE ACTUALLY REALLY GOOD
AT THAT GUITAR"

PHOTO BY TARA JATTEI

not gonna be the easiest thing for the people who have lived through ■ counterculture subculture that has pathways really well-carved for how to stick it to the man, but doesn't have pathways really well-carved for how to be critically thinking about detangling the binary, or *actually* confronting racism and white supremacist systems in a way that has ■ tangible result rather than just theoretical intellectualizing. I feel like that's what we're going towards and it's painful while we're getting there, but it's so desirable and better. **Griffin:** Obviously, it's hard to look in and see the prejudices that everyone has, especially if you've lived your whole life being a punk and being someone that is of course pro-gay and of course anti-racist, and then someone's like, "Uh, hey, calling you on micro-aggressions." Of course everyone fucks up sometimes. It's hard to then be self-critiquing and growing and still trying to figure that all out. There's an older generation that has forever defined themselves in this way and to them, this meant that they obviously were not racist, obviously were not this, obviously were not that. And then when we start being like, "Well, that word isn't chill anymore," or

"This isn't okay," whatever it is, even with confronting internalized stuff. You know, if ■ older ■■ asks me something kinda sexist and pretty stupid, it's like, "Are you asking me this because I'm ■ woman?" Yeah, you are, and what does that mean?

Erica: Totally. If we aren't able to acknowledge within ourselves that we are carrying those big, you know, the big trifecta—the racism, the sexism, and the classism—if we're not able to admit to ourselves that we're carrying those things in us and that they are nuanced, then we won't be able to actually unlearn them or, the ultimate goal, cast them from our society.

More important than calling out the whole world for where everyone else is falling short is to look inside ourselves. For instance, I've always been against homophobia. I've always had gay people in my family, in my life, in my closest relationships. And I remember as a younger person in my teens and twenties saying over and over again, "Oh, I'm not homophobic, I don't understand how anybody could be homophobic, because I have always known gay people and loved gay people and I don't have homophobia."

And then in my late twenties, I got to confront the pieces of myself that were holding me back from my own queer sexuality. I hadn't let myself come out as ■ queer person because besides being hot for butches and femmes, for gender-fucking people who don't fit a category, I also ■■ attracted to cis-men. There was ■ piece of ■■ that didn't want to take up space in ■ marginalized community or potentially hurt someone by not being one hundred percent gay.

That's homophobia. It doesn't look like slandering anybody and it didn't look like thinking of anybody's sexuality as the first piece of them before thinking of them as ■ individual. It didn't look like wishing we had segregation in our society, but it did look like very subtle cloying pieces of my own self-worth that had to do with what I was allowing for myself and what I wasn't.

So that's a chill, pretty small example of detangling latent oppressive subconscious thoughts. I think the same is absolutely true about all of the oppressive aspects of our society—we're carrying all of them within us. If you just look at it like, "I'm not

racist" for instance, you're missing out on the learning opportunity of figuring out how you can be **more** effective in the movement for change.

You're missing out on an opportunity if you don't learn the ways within yourself that you **are** silently propping up the system of white supremacy, or silently propping up **a** mostly white punk scene, or a mostly male punk scene, or **a** business/service that the people from the area can't afford. You're missing out on an opportunity, or perpetuating the problem if you don't take the time to look at the prejudice within yourself, and then sit with the discomfort of arriving there and not knowing what to do with it.

I think that fear of not knowing what to do once we've acknowledged our own roles in these systems that shame and divide us can keep **us** from looking directly at ourselves. But it's okay, keep educating yourself and reaching out to the pathways that are being carved out by really badass people who **are** leading the charge for shifting our culture. It's worth it.

Also we were talking about people being afraid to say the wrong thing, and you said something that I think is **a** really important piece for right now which is that education *is* becoming more accessible, but if you didn't learn the vocabulary in your gender studies class at your college or on the hippest tumblrs, or if you weren't exposed to the scene going through your teens getting super well-versed in gender vocabulary and participating in badass activism, it can really feel like you have **a** huge setback.

Similar to sitting in the discomfort of looking at yourself and seeing where you have **a** lot more room to grow, is the challenge of not shaming other people who aren't understanding these things in the **same** way that you are. I feel like the answer to everybody being afraid of saying the wrong thing is more compassion and less call out culture on the part of those of **us** who have spent time self-educating and unlearning oppressive ways of thinking—recognizing that we have the potential of being **a** intellectual bully if we're punishing somebody for not being as up on the current vocabulary or concepts. Not to mention this usually displays insecurity on the part of the person who feels superior for having *this* vocabulary or *those* concepts figured out.

We all have to have room to grow and that room to grow just doesn't come from anywhere. It doesn't get handed down by the state. Room to grow comes from us making room for each other to learn. I'm not advocating for passivity or letting people walk on us. I will get fucking very angry at someone who talks to me in a way that is condescending because of my gender—it happens so much. I'm a bomb guitar player, a really good singer, and I tour all over the world with my band, I'm on Spotify, and we've got a zillion Youtube views. I've got cred behind me and I still hear the most painfully misogynistic stuff from people being like, "Wow, you're *actually* really good at that guitar."



PHOTO BY REBECCA SUEN

I feel no matter how much of a resume you build, you still **are** subject to those comments and, like you said, micro-aggressions. Little comments that aren't meant to hurt, but do, just cut you down at the root. So I'll get furious and I'll stand up for myself by cutting someone down. I'll participate in call out culture if that's the tool for the job, but that's just one tool, and I see us relying on call out culture too often and moving away from more compassionate techniques for dealing with each other and learning together.

Like, you were talking about with the people, the old guard punks who are like, "You don't know how to have fun," or "You're making **a** big deal out of something that doesn't matter." They're not making room for you to grow and adapt and, in turn, they're not learning either. But you can just take that room. I just take it.

Griffin: Did you feel you faced different sexism and prejudices or like, "Wow, you're actually **a** good guitar player"-type comments more in running Rumbletowne Records than from playing in bands?

Erica: Running RTR was entirely about doing behind-the-scenes work to support and elevate bands and musicians. I felt respected and didn't experience prejudice. Most of the pressing plants in the USA are staffed by majority women and everyone of any gender that I interfaced with was nearly always respectful and professional. There's a long history of women occupying support roles to the spectacle of punk: photographers, zinesters, writers, groupies, booking agents, volunteering, staffing venues, and on and on.

Griffin: I **was** reading an interview you did with CLRVTNT, where you mentioned a RVIVR tour in Ireland, and you had asked your booker to have you play with other bands with women in them and people actually boycotted the show because you wanted that. When people are saying we're being "uptight" or "no fun" or "making too big of **a** deal," what is your advice or what is your experience in being like, "No, this shit is still happening?"

Erica: Aren't you tired of still saying that? It's painful. Sometimes it makes **me** so depressed that I just stare at **a** wall with **a** single tear running down my cheek. I'm, like, "Really?" Sisyphus. Pushing the boulder up the hill and

it rolls back down over and over. One thing is, today, that wouldn't happen if we were to put in the exact same variables of RVIVR going to Dublin. We probably wouldn't even have to ask for there to be other women on the show if we went back to Ireland today. Usually we say, "We want to play with other people who are women or queer, 'cause those **are** the identities that we have in our band and it feels more comfortable just to play with people that share our identities." I guarantee you our show would not be boycotted for saying that today. Because the culture has shifted, and I don't think that the culture has shifted because of us. But I think that being **a** stick in the spokes of "business **is** usual," seven years ago or whenever that happened, was part of what helped change the culture. I can't claim it, but I can definitely say that it was worth it. The not-that-great show and the drama was worth contributing to the cultural shift.

Plus, we played with a band at that show called Kate's Party and I still see the people from the band. They're so wonderful. I guess that's my advice. It's worth it if some people think you're being a bum or "not cool" if you feel like what you are standing for is **a** cultural shift that is important to you. And also, really—I say this to myself all the time—to not take yourself too seriously. Also to know that we're fighting for change but we're still trying to laugh and have a good time. Your whole life can't be this bitter, grim-mouthed fight for change that, really, we're not going to see in our lifetimes in some massive societal way. So we might as well have a good time while we **are** working for it.

Griffin: Totally. What is your personal definition of self-care, and what **are** some methods you practice self-care? As a musician, as an activist, as a woman in the world.

Erica: This is kind of a hard question because the first thing that pops into my mind **are** all the ways that I don't do **a** good enough job. I have a bad relationship with time. I always feel like there's not enough and I know that that is so much in my head, because I spend too much time feeling stressed out that I'm running out of time.

To take care of myself, I have **a** collection of really, really powerful women who live all over the world—who aren't necessarily

connected to each other and they may not even know—but they are my fucking safety net. Just doing totally, totally different and independent projects. Most of them don't have to do with music, where they are individually picking away at making the world a better place. They are who I summon in my head when I feel like I'm drowning. 'Cause you know I'm subject to all the same insecurities everybody is: my friends don't like me, I'm gonna be depressed forever, nothing I've done has any worth, I'll never write another good song. All those things, you just have to keep pushing against that tide. I think my biggest self-care that I don't always do is writing music. It's the way that I process the hardest stuff. Sometimes the stuff I have to disguise, I'll bury it in a song where the listener will never ever know what I was processing.

Griffin: What would you say is self-care?

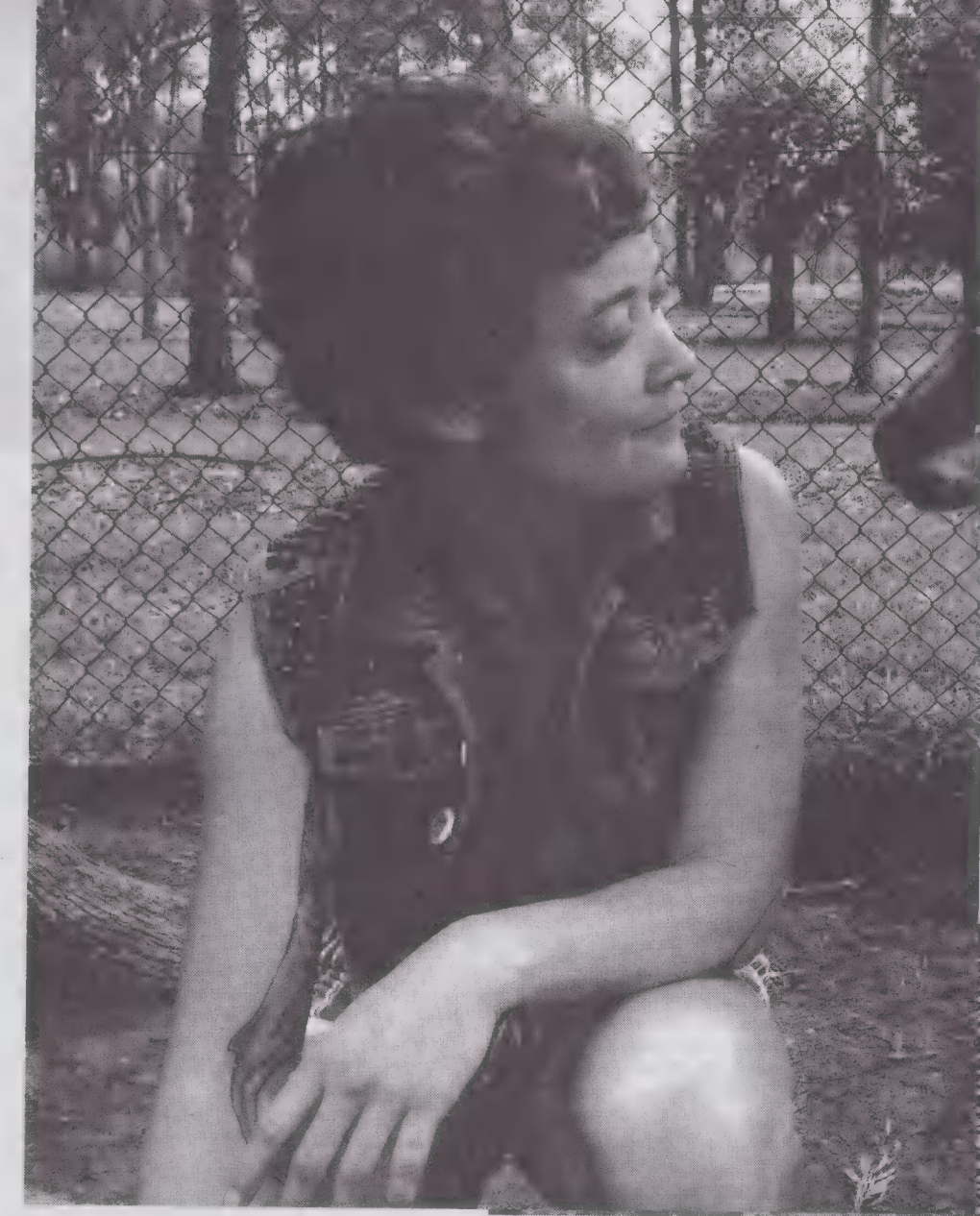
Erica: This grim first thing I thought is self-care is staying alive, which is just true. Staying alive. Giving yourself permission to be happy, because there's so much to be fearful or shameful about. You know, participating in a society that is really hurting the whole world, that relies on a lot of slavery, and allowing yourself to feel all of that hurt and to participate in working for change but also to know that it is important to do things to feel happy in the middle of all that.

Griffin: I want to pick your brain about ways that we can further break down barriers to social justice or social progress being academic, or privileged, information?

Erica: The easy first thing that comes to mind is that the most poignant and successful social justice endeavors are lead by the people who are most affected. Period. Everywhere in the world. Nobody is going to fight as hard or know the best recipe for what to demand and ask for than the people who are most affected. Those people are usually not college students; sometimes they are. I feel like seeking out already existing programs of social change—projects, coalitions, stuff like that—that are being lead by the people being most affected by whatever it is you're trying to focus on, is paramount. I think that's what we need to be doing.

Like with Standing Rock last year, a leading intersection of environmental justice, racial justice, and huge class warfare. There was no other way to go about that than to listen to the people from that land. To listen to the indigenous resistance and follow suit. Lots of people went there and didn't listen and then you got to hear all the callouts of people being like, "Please don't come here unless you are following our directive." I feel like that's a really contained version. There were rules broadcasted of how to click in and participate, which is so helpful. I want to say thank you 100,000 times to the people who took the time to build that kind of infrastructure.

I think you can see that same sort of thing in any area in all the fronts: the environmental front, the racial justice front, the just housing front, trans rights front. You can find people



who occupy those identities with their lives and are leading the charge for change and listen to them. Believe them. Follow them. Don't try to invent a new way. Listen to the people who are already doing it. With my set of identities, I have spent my life wanting to figure out how to help make a change in areas that don't have to do with my identity—and have often come up against a brick wall. If it's coming from me, then I'm "a savior" and I don't want to be a savior. I want to be in service to helping change a culture that is totally fucked up and violent. With social media, it is possible to tune in and listen for direction on how to contribute in a way that wasn't accessible when I was younger. There's no piece of me that wants to be the one who came up with how we fix what's broken. I want to serve. I want to help.

In terms of performance and music, I do think a lot about how to shift the way that we are making our show environments. We have done a really good job of making space

for making people feel like the show is going to be a less violent arena and I feel like next is expanding how to make the show feel like a space that more identities would feel welcome coming to. I'm honestly watching for other people who are figuring that out so that I can follow suit because I don't think the answers come from me. So, I'm listening.

Griffin: You have a quote from an interview with CLRVYNT, and I just really like that you said: "There is an access thing where some crappy band with all men in it is way more likely to get on the big stage than a weird band with people of mixed genders. So I do think that a lot of progress has been made." You were talking about how there were more women and queer presenting and openly queer bands playing on the big stage of a fest this year. Do you feel that progress is happening now?

Erica: Yeah, but I in no way meant by that that we are at any finish line. At any big fest, unless it is specifically by and for people of



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PHOTO BY TARA JEFFREY

diverse identities, it's going to be the same identities that we have been taught our entire life to think of as the successful ones, which, in punk, are white cis men. We still are reproducing the same things that we grew up thinking of as the successful identities.

Because of being in RVIVR for so long—it's been almost a decade of being in this band where we are somewhat known, people do reach out to us to ask to be a part of something, and sometimes, I can really feel that it's tokenizing, that the point is that they want to bring the diversity that we would represent. Sometimes that feels good. It feels good to be a band fronted by two women, one trans, one cis, and just tear the house down on a main stage knowing that by doing that we are contributing to other women seeing themselves in that position of power.

Sometimes I'm like, "I think not. You haven't done enough of the other pieces that make the space feel like it's gonna be bomb for people like us, and you just want to tick

off the box for what's cool right now." And I don't want my identity to be "cool." I want it to be normal, like breathing. I don't want it to be phenomenal. I want it to be average and equal.

Griffin: Women in bands aren't "cool." It's normal. It should be a very normal thing. Last year Box Fan played my house and Vicky asked me if I played in bands. I said I didn't and she responded "Why not?" It was the first time that someone had given me that response and it was life-changing.

Erica: I love that. I fucking love Vicky. She's amazing, left, right, and center.

Griffin: It was so special. And that's the problem. Women don't get that response enough, like it should be, "You should be doing this. There's space for all of us!"

Erica: Sure, and if your answer had been, "You know I'm just not really interested in it. I love journalism," that would've been fine, too. But that thing that you're describing, it hit a profound piece of you that hadn't been touched.

That's the messaging that we get, that certain people are allowed to have certain roles. And I know this isn't true for all women or all people who are socialized as women, but it is for me. I'm still untangling that inner voice that's like, "You don't deserve that," or, "That's not what your role gets to do" and I hate it. I'm so sick of it. Well, lately I get more angry when I do hear that voice. But, I'm like, that is fucking real. That piece of your soul you're describing that got touched by Vicky saying that and you realizing that it is previously uncharted territory. And how old are you?

Griffin: I'm twenty-two.

Erica: So you made it twenty-two years, in punk, doing *Razorcake*, booking shows, without having that piece of you touched, where I think like, if you grew up with it being more normal, seeing people who looked like you, people who occupied the same space on the gender spectrum as you, then you would just feel like you had the authority to go there.

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Griffin: Before this interview, you and I texted earlier about Rihanna. What is the way that we can empower women and celebrate women, even more mainstream, famous women, and still allow room for critique about capitalism and consumerism?

Erica: I don't think that women, or anyone, should be beyond critique because of our identities. But there is a thing there—the internal misogyny, the internal sexism—that I feel we all would do better if we all confronted. We do hold people to different standards based on identity, and sometimes that doesn't look like we're talking about their identity at all. It's just like, "It gives me ■ weird feeling that they ■ like that," "It gives me a weird feeling that she got that kind of success."

We get more angry and critical when women don't live up to our expectations of role model behavior. We know better than to be openly sexist so we disguise it by subconsciously settling with, "She didn't write her own songs." "I don't like the style in which she represents women." "She's a bitch to other women," or ironically, "She's not that good but she's been elevated based on her gender." As for celebrity culture, we avoid it, relish it, or consume it in secret—women get way ■ destroyed than ■ within celebrity. I don't need to explain that.

Griffin: I think it's just ■ more complex than, "Fuck all famous people." And I'm too young, I don't know what punk was like in the '70s. But from my experience doing *Razorcake*, most of my friends ■ older than me. Just glimpsing into the stories and the pictures and the music that I've heard from when they were twenty, I just feel like right now we're at ■ point where younger punks have a different relationship with popular culture. There's not this, "Oh, anything popular, *fuck it*." There's more, "We ■ enjoy things and they can be worthy of critique, and we ■ like this part of it and not like that part. And we can talk like this and dress like this and it's just more open."

Erica: Which it has to be because punk just looks totally different than it did. Even in the '90s. The internet made punk look totally different and also the desire for it to be adapting for people who have different desires, who have different identities, different ever-changing politics. It had to look different. Also, there ■ plenty of punk bands that are upper echelon celebrities. Why are we allowed to have a soft spot for Green Day, but if you love Rihanna, you're breaking stride?

Griffin: Not even Green Day! Fucking everyone's obsessed with the Ramones. It's like, you can buy a Ramones shirt at Target. Fuck you. They're a great band. I still love Beyonce. Also ■ great musician. Sometimes there's this weird energy that's hating on selfies or shitting on young girls and lip gloss or whatever and it's just misogyny. It's like, "What you're saying right now is femininity in whatever way is weak." That's what I'm hearing from you.

Erica: I remember in my early-, mid-twenties, I was really into punk and I loved

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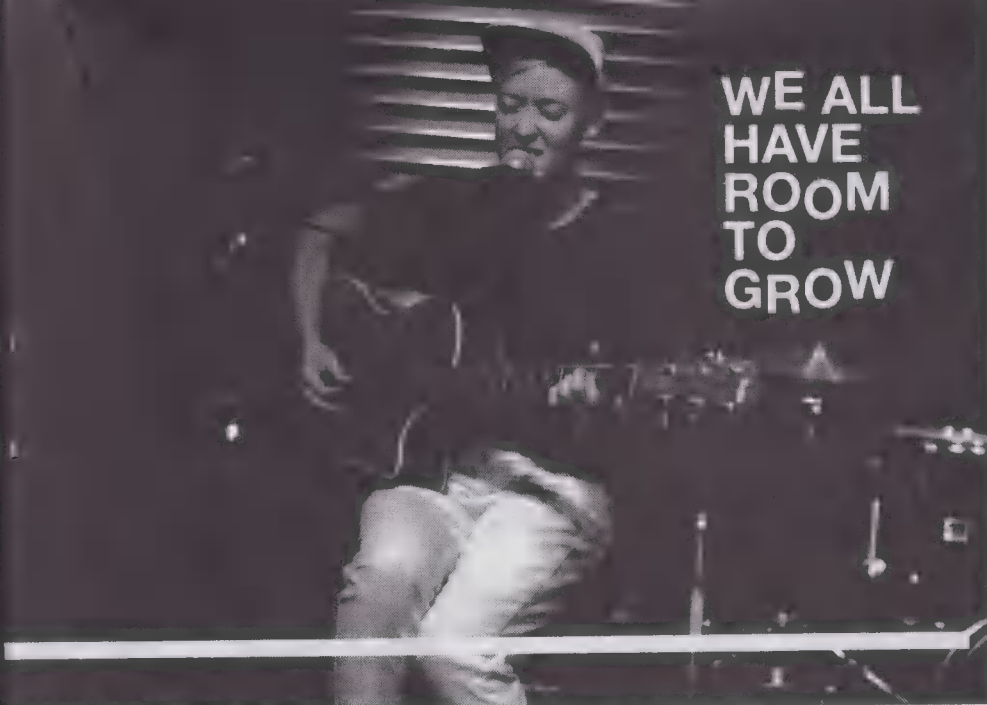


PHOTO BY K TRAM

that masculine punk look. So I had my Carhartt jeans that were patched out in a masculine way, and I felt, what looked really good was looking really "male," which is fine at face value. But I also saw how a subtle underlying sexism was going on in my mind, that presenting as feminine did seem weak or less attractive. I wanted to be associated with the more powerful end of things, which is totally debasing that you can be powerful as fuck in a skirt and lip gloss. Or in whatever, there's no need to even list it. Your power isn't wrapped up in how you're presenting and strength doesn't always look like carrying the heaviest object. But I had to untangle that one, too.

Griffin: After owning and running your own label, are you ever "nostalgic" for your earlier days when you weren't as experienced and accomplished with music—you record and play with what you can, how you can. Do you ever wish you could go back to that?

Erica: Sometimes, sure. I miss being a twenty-five-year-old. I was learning how to play power chords, eating a lot of trash and alcohol, hadn't learned a lot of lessons that came hard over the next decade. But I also didn't recognize how much power or ability I had. I wrote songs with so much shyness and embarrassment that ended up being total bangers like "Belly" and "Real Mean." I credited other people around me for our successes and it took a long time to look at myself and notice that I brought a lot to the table. I'd go back and tell myself that I was worth more than I knew at the time, but I wouldn't trade then for now.

Griffin: Do you think an important part of playing music and recording music is learning and developing a bigger skill set that you can work off of?

Erica: I definitely believe that everything we do adds up to broader skill sets that are useful in surprising ways of our lives. Coming from a DIY subculture taught me and a lot of my favorite people how to take initiative and get

shit done without waiting for an authority to point us in the right direction. This has served me in countless scenarios that have nothing to do with music or punk, like not being afraid to take on a job or a role with confidence and figure it out on the fly. Fake it till you make it. Sometimes that leads to subideal outcomes, but failure leads to growth and the confidence is the important part. I attribute that to DIY.

Griffin: What was the process and mindset in recording earlier music, like the RVIVR self-titled, now that you have a bigger skill set and more experience?

Erica: When we were taking on the self-titled RVIVR LP, I felt like a tagalong. When I listen to it now, I hear my contributions and I think they sound rad: the guitar leads and lyrics I contributed to songs that came from Mattie Jo and the songs I wrote and we turned into RVIVR tunes. But I wasn't seeing myself as a driving influence. I didn't have the confidence to contribute many suggestions while mixing for fear they'd be wrong somehow. I had super thin skin if I did make a suggestion and it wasn't received well.

I gained more confidence through recording *Dirty Water* (RVIVR, 2010), *Belly* (solo, 2012), and *The Beauty Between* (RVIVR, 2013). When I recorded my solo EP *Tether* (which came out on One Brick Today Records from Sydney, Australia) in 2013, I intentionally recorded it away from Olympia, away from any of my consistent collaborators, in order to stand in my own authority as a song-maker and recording artist. I faked casual confidence. Now, I love recording. I am confident. I know how and what to ask for to make for the best experience and, hopefully, a great-sounding end result.

Griffin: As you've been releasing your own bands on your own label for almost a decade. How was releasing *Patient Ones* and re-releasing the self-titled RVIVR LP with

Don Giovanni different than when you self-released your records?

Erica: I can't really speak yet about how it feels to be on a label other than Rumbletowne Records. It felt really rad to submit all my art and sound to Don Giovanni and get boxes of the finished records looking beautiful, delivered to my house rather than monitoring the whole process of manufacturing. I'm grateful that they got me on the radar for *She Shreds Magazine* and are handling the distribution. I've been doing everything myself for so long—every aspect of production, promotion and mailorder—that I'm still kind of stunned at having those things removed from my plate. I feel happy and like I'm a new kid at school or something.

The recording process hasn't changed even though the label has changed. I recorded *Patient Ones* at Neanderhall Studios in Olympia with my friend Matt Buscher.

Griffin: What was the growth curve for you like in being a punk musician, learning instruments, kinda messing around, to later learning how to master and record and be "professional." That's a bad word. "Experienced," maybe?

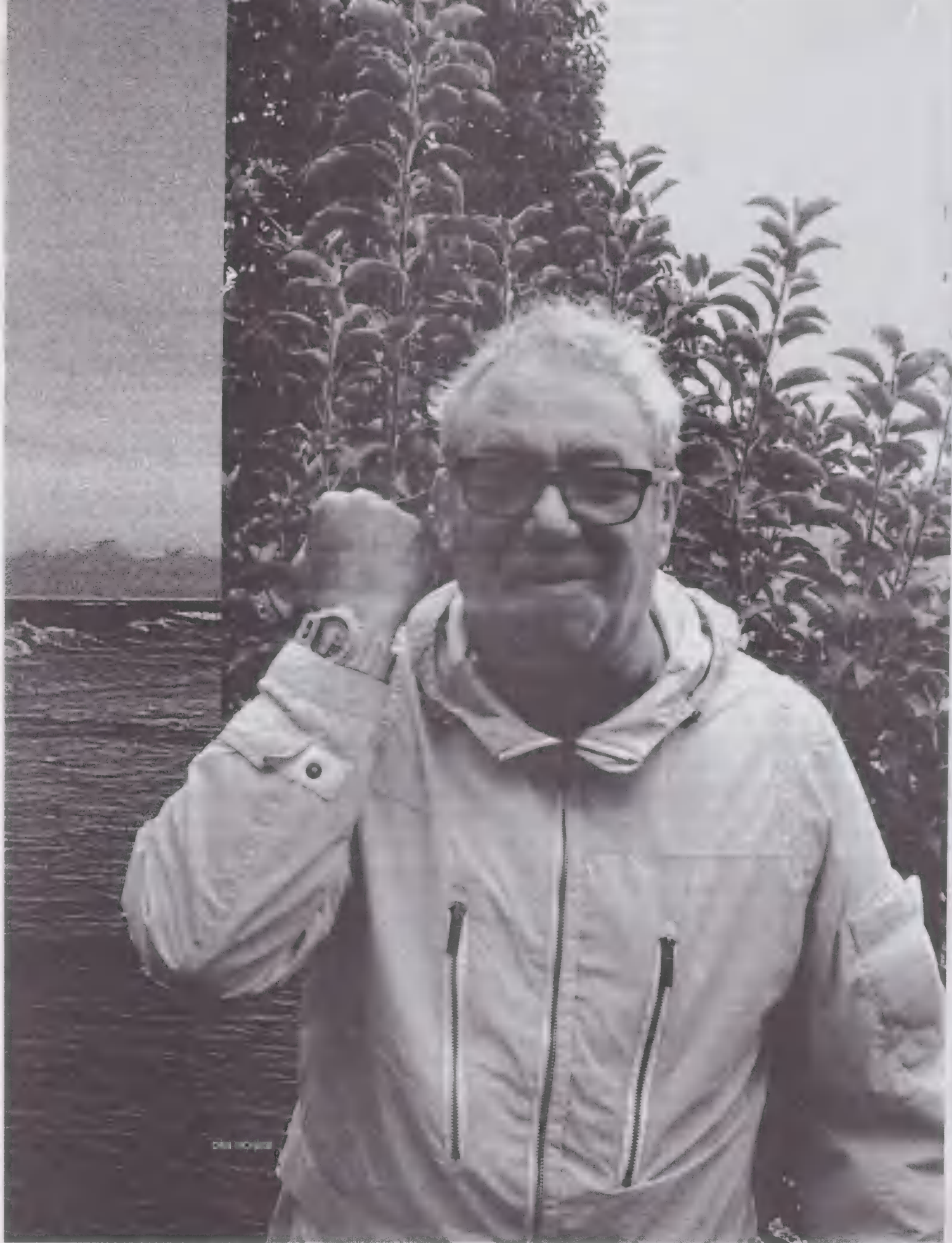
Erica: I don't think of myself or RVIVR as professional. We're good at what we do when we put our minds to it, but we're also just figuring it out as we go along and we always have been. Kevin, Mattie Jo, and I decided to work to be tighter together as we were getting ready to record the self-titled LP. We encourage each other to work hard and be a good band, to write good songs. It's fun to work hard in a collaborative relationship and I'm grateful we didn't shy away from working hard because of the idea that punks don't like work. Every time you endeavor to try something new or try something again, you learn more about it.

Griffin: Do you feel you listen to music differently now after running a label?

Erica: Unfortunately, yeah. I feel pretty jaded in this area. Less from running the label than from touring so much over the past eight years and watching thousands of bands' live sets. This is what I think most when people warn you not to make your passion your "job." By being immersed and going so hard for so long, I have lost some of the depths of magic I used to experience at a live show and I easily fall out of the loop on what's good and new. I do still love playing. I'm hoping that putting RTR behind me will free up some brain space to get some of that magic back.

Griffin: *Razorcake* does a running section of "Top Fives." For this issue, what is your top five? It can be anything.

Erica: Playing Interrupting Jukebox on the beach with Jack and Socket, July 2017. Mt. Eerie performing *A Crow Looked at Me* to a room full of broken-open hearts in Olympia, April 2017. SUGARKANE, live under a parachute tent on a mountain in Bandung, Indonesia, February 2017. Wheelchair Sports Camp with Kimya Dawson, The Bridge Youth MCs, and Shameka Gagnier, March 2017. The room singing loud with me at the Midway Speakeasy, Pouzza Fest 2017.



MIKE WATT

PART I

MIKE WATT INTERVIEW
BY TODD TAYLOR AND
MIKE FALOON

INTRODUCTION BY
TODD TAYLOR

PHOTOS BY SHANTY
CHERYL, EL DIABLO,
ROBERT IBARRA, AND
DAN MONICK

LAYOUT BY
ERIC BASKAUSKAS

"It's a bit dumb that *Razorcake*'s never interviewed Mike Watt."

"Wait. Mike Watt's never been interviewed in *Razorcake*?"

"No. Weird, right? We've covered plenty of Pedro bands."

"Never? That can't be right."

"Several people offered, but it never panned out. He even played a show for us at Pehrspace."

I know it's just a number, but the hundredth issue has some numerical heft to it. For a zine, it's a survival number. There's only a handful of zines in the history of publishing that have ever made it this far.

I wanted to interview another punk milestone, to add personal meaning to a momentous occasion.

Mike Watt was the bassist of the almost immeasurably influential Minutemen, a band he started with his best friend, D. Boon. After the tragic death of D. Boon in an automobile accident, Mike continued on with FIREHOSE. Following a brush with death from an ingrown hair on his perineum, Mike tripped down. He put music out under his name ("so you know who to blame") and has created three operas. He plays with an incredible, shifting array of other musicians (from jazz legends to The Stooges). He collaborates worldwide with people he's never seen face-to-face.

The day of the interview, Watt rolled in like a fog—knees stiff, his boat safely moored at the bottom of the street.

Mike Faloon and I had prepared five pages of questions. Watt started talking well before we started recording, as we walked back to the studio. I knew Watt was a talker who had his own lexicon, but ten, fifteen minutes in, we hadn't asked him a single question. He had his spiel. He'd come prepared.

After I asked my first prepared question, I wasn't sure he'd heard it. It seemed like he headed off in a completely different direction. Minutes later, it dawned on me that Watt wasn't fishing with a single line. He casted wide nets: nets of deep musical history, nets of interpersonal relationships, nets of associative memories, observations, and ethics.

An hour later, Watt pulled in the first net. All of these seemingly unconnected things that had been swimming in a vast sea of knowledge were cinched up and flopped on a scale for Faloon and me to understand the weight of.

It was masterful. Linear thought is for squarejohns. Much respect to Watt. Welcome to Part I, the end of a century.

WHY IS PUNK NOT IN SOME
GLASS BOX IN A MUSEUM OR
SHRINE OR TOMB OR DUMPSTER?
HOW DID IT
KEEP GOING?



Todd: Let's talk about zines.

Watt: Yeah. Early in the movement—even with SoCal, but especially outside—the fabric was the zines. That's how you knew. Actually, when Greg (Ginn) and Chuck (Dukowski, both of Black Flag) got the touring thing together, they actually got to meet these guys. You'd conk at their pad—they'd get the VFW or Italian-American Club going. It was really interesting. Parallel universe. People like Kickboy Face (née, Claude Bessy, *Slash* magazine) and Al Flipside. Intense cats. You could tell when they wrote, they loved it. The other towns—I didn't know 'em, couldn't talk to 'em so much until you went on tour and saw them.

My guess was when the internet came on that those ethics—no filter—everyone would have their own website. Same idea. We all wouldn't meet at the Fakelook or the Shitter. Strange how that didn't happen. The idea of parallel universes still works. You have both the zine and you're using the internet as a way of getting rid of the gatekeeper, the toll booth monitor.

Todd: If there's no zine for *Razorcake*, there's no heart. It's our connecting point for everything we do.

Watt: You know, D. Boon (Minutemen) had one? About six issues. It was called *The Prole*. He had me write record reviews and it was called "Nitt's Picks." Because when I was young, for some reason, we had a nickname for me that only we used. "P Nitt." And I think Nitt might have been like some weird version of Watt. I think "nit"'s some slang for "lies"—one "t." People already thought Mike Watt and D. Boon were our punk names. When we started Reactionaries, I remember Georgie (George Hurley) picked "G-man" and Martin (Tamburovich co-founder of New Alliance Records) picked "Mar-T." Like Don Bonebrake. Perfect. Didn't have to change.

Todd: That's D.J.'s real name? No.

Watt: Yeah. Born with it. Think he's a valley (San Fernando Valley) guy. He's the only one guy that's always been SoCal from that band (X). When I first saw him, he was in the Eyes.

Todd: The song "Take a Quaalude Now."

Watt: Yeah, before that was "Blow Up Disneyland." I think it's on *Yes L.A.*... They called that *TAQN*. (Title of the EP.) Famous bass player. She went on to start Go-Go's. Charlotte (Caffey). She went on to marry one of the Redd Kross guys. She was a bass. John Doe wrote a book on the old days (*Under the Big Black Sun*). He divided it up. Smart thing to do, especially SoCal; it was pretty spread out. Jack's (Grisham, T.S.O.L.) is great. "Don't blame us. You started it."

We were doing talks. Chris D. (Flesh Eaters), also writing for *Slash*. And then working at the label (Slash), which was much different from Kickboy. With Chris, there's definitely some continuity. Charlotte, she thanks Don because John Doe and Billy Zoom actually stole him from the band. She said, because that band broke up, she had to go and start another one. It ended up being very successful.

But I liked Eyes. The main man was Joe Ramirez. This is the second Masque, the one that was on Santa Monica Boulevard. It had a parking lot that was not paved. So when it rained, it got muddy.

Sputnik: 1957. I'm thirteen in 1970. My whole life is punk rock. I don't know anything about clubs. Somebody got a fuckin' bucket and filled it with mud. Joe Ramirez is playing his guitar and singing. Comes in the club with this bucket, throws it right on his face and on his strings. He keeps playing and singing. It was like, "Whoah!" Never saw something like this happen at a gig before. I think he lives in Idaho now, I heard. That's a memory.

About ethics—and why is punk not in some glass box in a museum or shrine or tomb or dumpster? How did it keep going? And I think it's because of some of these—if I can use these words—ethics. Maybe it's aesthetics, too. And it wasn't narrow a style of music or even clothes. Pretty wide open and I still think it is.

Todd: I do, too.

Watt: You know, in those days, things changed really fast. It got to a point where it plateaued out. Whole bunch of years go by and not that much different. Me, in December, I'm sixty. A punk rocker who is a teenager shares a lot of things with me. It's crazy. It changed a lot in those days and a lot of it's circumstance. When you're born. Who do you know. Who you don't know.

Todd: Where you're born.

Watt: Yeah. The geography. Even us being Pedro guys. Very lucky. Because living close to Zed Records in Long Beach. Because the records were a big part of it, too. Bands we never saw, only heard. Imagine. Then going to the gigs. Then finding people close to you, like Hermosa (Beach). I know, anything south of Melrose (Blvd.) is the beach, right? [laughs] But we didn't know these guys from shinola. Wilmington, right next to us, Sacchrine Trust came from that town and we're buddies. In fact, Joe Baiza lived underneath D. Boon when we started Minutemen.

Ever been to Harold's Place?

Todd: Yeah.

Watt: It's an old biker bar. Blows my mind that there's a gins there. Cross the street—you can even see behind the building—one of these pads that's in the back alley, that's where we started the Minutemen. Maybe 519 West 19th Street. It's the pad in the back. I could point it to ya. It was in the *We Jam Econo* thing (Minutemen documentary). Anyway, when we're getting together the first batch of Minutemen songs, the problem with me and D. Boon was always drummers, because we never had a pad—a place in a backyard like you got here for radio broadcasting. You know, up here (Highland Park), there's another guy who does this. Marc. Comedian guy.

Todd: Oh yeah. He's a big time guy.

Faloon: Marc Maron.

Watt: But it's kind of like this. It's not that big time. He's got some guitars.

AND
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Todd: He interviewed President Obama there.
Watt: He doesn't have ■■■ of those. [Points to the photocopier.] He doesn't have one of these big machines.

Todd: We put our own Kinko's in here.

Watt: Anyways, so we're just getting the first batch of songs together without ■ drummer. He says he knows ■ guy at Harbor College. Turned out to be ■ welder-man called Frank Tonche. "Let us get the tunes together." He lives in his sister's backyard, so we can prac (practice) the drums. We're up there. We don't want to make trouble.

There's only two hundred people in the scene, but you didn't really know 'em. You kinda knew 'em, but you didn't know 'em.

Todd: Knew them by sight.

Watt: You knew them by their look. Joe Baiza—very distinctive look. Still. Must have known who we were. But we didn't want to make trouble or anything. We're playing the guitar and bass with no amplifiers. To keep the beat, we're using the deck (floor). Hours of this, right? Joe Baiza, later on, he thinks we're up there dancing.

Todd: Kinda are.

Watt: Because he can't hear anything. Can't hear the guitar and the bass. He's just hearing this constant [rapidly taps feet ■■ floor] for hours. That was funny. Then we got Frank, but after two gigs he didn't want to do any more. He said it was scary. Or just weird.

Strange thing. Georgie (Hurley) joined after Reactionaries split up. He joined ■ band called Hey Taxi! That band broke up, so Georgie was available. Greg asked us to do SST 002. Georgie learns the songs in three weeks. It's July 20, 1980. So four days ago, it was thirty-seven years. Recorded and mixed one night. It ended up being called *Paranoid Time*. There were a couple songs that didn't make it, ■■■ out ■■ other stuff. It's very exciting for us. Spot did it. Greg was there. Martin was there, from The Reactionaries, but he fell asleep. We wanted to get him to join in ■■ the chanting for "Paranoid Chant" and "Joe McCarthy's Ghost." But Georgie's little brother Gregory was there, so he came in for the spiel, I'm pretty sure.

Luckily, we got to talk to *Flipside*. In fact, they put ■ on ■ video. I think it's the first time we're on ■ video.

Todd: It got re-released ■ *Best of Flipside Video #2*. Minutemen and Minor Threat.

Watt: I think it's from that. But we never got to do ■ *Slash* spiel. Kickboy, these guys, them people in the band (Germs)—Darby (Crash), Pat (Smear), Lorna (Doom), Don (Bolles)—you could talk to these cats, no problem. Tony (Kinman), Chip (Kinman, both of The Dils). John Doe. Really different kind of scene than arena rock, spectator, Nuremberg rally participants [laughter]. All of ■ sudden, this club thing.

And then I've done 125 months with Stooges. Finally, the youngest guy in the band. [laughter] You can imagine being around them, my ears, like elephant-sized sponges. From them, I learned the '60s had all kinds of club action. Garage bands. Little labels. Threads of this movement go way

back. Even Walt Whitman putting out *Leaves of Grass* in 1855.

Todd: It's ■ zine.

Watt: Puts it out. No one will publish it. He writes fake letters. "Hey, you gotta check out this book." [laughs] He was his own promo dude. Even the impetus to do it; he writes twelve poems to try to stop the Civil War. It was slow motion—everyone knew it was coming. Dudes at ■ factory or on the farm at lunchtime would woop this book out, start reading it. "Fuck it. We don't need ■ war." [laughter]

That kind of tradition, if you look at that—that's why I say ethics. And then the aesthetic part, or style, that's up to each person or group of people—a band, or a staff of a zine—define their own way, their own voice. It's trippy how sometimes that stuff has to all be surrendered to make a movement. Because in the long run, it's probably going to hurt it.

Todd: Guts it.

Watt: It just becomes form. Hobby horse. I've said this before, but many more "Tutti Frutti"s were sold by Pat Boone than Little Richard. And it was probably—I think I read somewhere that Pat Boone was embarrassed and it was his manager's idea. Little Richard had something really neat to say about it, though. "Well, his version was for the living room and mine was the bedroom." [laughter] We're talking sixty, seventy years ago. This is not a new phenomena of things getting co-opted.

What's the new flavor-of-the-day called? "Hipster." What's trippy about this one is that it doesn't have ■ music. Usually, there's ■ music with a movement.

Todd: That's true.

Watt: Another thing. Bumper stickers. When I was a teenager, huge thing. Look at most cars. Hardly any bumper stickers. *The Guardian* people called me when this election went down. The words and the songs change. See, I think in the old days, you didn't have the Shitter, The Fakelook, and people doing the CB radio thing there. They did it on their bumper stickers. They did it in lyrics of songs.

Actually, us going to our first gigs of the movement—Bags—"Wow, this is why people have lyrics in songs." Before that, we thought it was some kind of lead guitar. "Smoke on the Water," and you find out later it was about a real fire. Goddamn. [laughter] But I remember at the time—and even Bob Dylan, he was like some weird great uncle muttering shit at Thanksgiving. You never thought words had meaning. Start re-listening to everything.

Just blown away by the "O" word. Opportunity. You're going to use music, or art—collages—the whole; fanzines goes back to the Dada, in Europe. In the middle of the First World War. Where you reappropriate things. I did it with some flyers. I never kept any of these. Yeah, I'd get the newspaper. In Pedro, it was called the *News Pilot*, but everyone called it *The Fish Wrap*. It was one of those Copley ones; don't know if you know

about Copley. They still have *Daily Breeze*. Certain kind of bend to it—they finally made fun of their own image and put ■ imprint of ■ fish in the middle. But I cut stuff out of there and the *L.A. Times* and I'd make ■ flyer out of this: pictures and ha-ha funny. I read somewhere that's what Bob Dylan did for *Tarantula*. "Tear-en-tula." After he wrote it—William S. Burroughs did this stuff.

Todd: The cut-up style.

Watt: Where you're letting random—you've got the stories and the reader will figure it out. You don't have to walk them through, paint-by-numbers. That's part of the art. Actually, in some of the early days, you could tell ■■■ of the cats were anti-rock'n'roll, or just what it had become. There was provocation. The performances were meant to jar you. When I first saw Nervous Gender—[laughs]—much different than arena rock. It was great. Gerardo (Velazquez). We lost him a number of years ago. What ■ great, balls-out band. Well, they had a guitar for a little bit with Phranc.

Todd: Mostly synthesizers, percussion.

Watt: Yeah. The Ramones, they were very early. They were very important. Beautiful band. I really didn't analyze music that much 'til Joey's brother, Mickey last year. It was the fortieth anniversary of the first album (Self-titled). He had Clem Burke (Blondie) and Cheetah Chrome (Dead Boys) played guitar and all these guest singers. They had the producer-man call in from England. It was a trip. I had to learn all these songs. Dee Dee wrote most of them, I found out. Clem would come down to Pedro, my prac pad. They're very interesting. There's something about Ramones. It's their music. It's not so much blues—like ■ lot of rock'n'roll, especially the stuff that ■■■ from England, ■ lot more blues-based. They have bridges. More like pop.

Faloon: Like Buddah Records, late-'60s pop stuff.

Watt: Even like Phil Spector. The idea of the bridge really isn't in the blues. Sometimes they don't even change parts. Sing the verse and the chorus. Just different words over the ■■■ parts. The idea where you leave, then you come back. The Ramones have got lots of that. Stuff I never paid attention to, because they're just ■■ much, everywhere.

I remember doing ■ gig with them; Joey talking to me backstage. He was talking about the movement. "It's like ■ big hay wagon. If you've got something to contribute, get on." Really optimistic guy. Dee Dee, too. You could tell ■■■ challenges up here [points to head]. Not trying to con somebody. I think there's something about the Ramones that's very happening. They were very early and they gave so many people permission, in ■ way. "Let your freak flag fly."

I know I read Johnny Rotten: "When we said we wanted ■ bunch of bands like this, we didn't want a bunch of bands just like us." You hear all kinds of New York Dolls in their music. That's where the Ramones—even though they're coming out of that Dolls... they knew that they wanted their own sound. I think it was Dee Dee, especially. Johnny

may be a little more on the look. And Joey with the voice, of course. "We're going to be us." I think that's a really important thing. I found that out about here.

One of the first bands to sell out the Whiskey that I went to was Screamers. They didn't have a guitar.

Todd: They didn't have a record released.

Watt: They thought that was over.

Todd: They were post-records.

Watt: They did the demos. Because at first they thought they were going to.

Todd: That has a 60 cycle hum through the whole recording.

Watt: Right. It was just a demo, though.

Todd: Ground your instruments.

Watt: Then there's that video thing that they have, for Target (Video) up in The City (San Francisco). Paul (Roessler) joined them. Me witnessing it, it was really important. People ask, "Why were the Minutemen so different?" Actually, we weren't, really. If you go back a couple years, remember I was saying things change so fast, so '70s punk band, it seems like it's a million years away from an '80s punk band.

Todd: Absolutely.

Watt: But in a way, it's not. It's only a little bit. The difference is they can hear their records. But there's other weird, trippy stuff going on. That's when people you met a lot at the scene were dudes who had deep knowledge of obscure, trippy musics.

Raymond Pettibon taught me so much. Brought me to my first Bebob gig. I thought John Coltrane was still alive. I thought he was a punk rocker, but an older one. [laughter] 'Cause he plays me *Ascension*. "Whoah. That's like a Nervous Gender gig. Germs. Totally wild from where I was coming from. So I think the Minutemen was really a coincidence in being in the right place, right time. Also not too close enough. We got back to Pedro, back to the Thermos bottle. The "Thermos bottle" metaphor is to describe our Pedro town in some ways "insulating" us, keeping us "Pedro," and not get too diluted with other stuff from other pads. It was one way us Minutemen could try and stay Minutemen. Everyone (in Hollywood) was living at The Canterbury (apartments). Still, at the same time, Richard Meltzer has a radio show, "Hepcats from Hell" on KPFK and he had these guys—John Cale (Velvet Underground) or Johnny Rotten—and it was really trippy. It was another universe.

But the squarejohns—actually, they weren't our biggest problem. The "guardians of rock 'n' roll," they were the worst problem. They were way worse than squarejohns. Squarejohns, the Italian-American Club, he don't know you from David Bowie or Charlie Daniels. He'll rent the thing out. The other person: "This ain't music. This is some weird...." It was almost like some of the police department had these ideas. We

had trouble with them. Not everybody, but some guys, they thought it was some sort of social disease. Weird things imagined. I think there's social disease in all kinds of things, but putting out records and fanzines and doing gigs? What is the appropriate way? It really got silly.

Down at the end of the road was Blink 182 and Green Day. What were they afraid of? But in those days, it was weird things. There was a group in Orange County—nothing against Orange County—a parent support group called Parents of Punks. And I remember Chuck Dukowski debated this lady, maybe on "Tom Snyder," late night. Maybe it's on Youtube.com. Chuck is laying it down, sort of like in *The Decline (of Western Civilization)*. He had a little rap. I don't think he has the 40 and the mohawk. He's pretty rational about it. A farmer would tell you, "If you want a good crop, use a lot of manure." So, in a lot of ways, it kind of helped.

Can I say one thing? In England, first album by Clash, first album by Jam—they're pretty good. Then they just turn into a regular rock band, 'cause those bands were signed by big labels. Huge.

Todd: CBS.

Watt: Polygram.

Todd: A&M.

Watt: In that time, maybe not so autonomous. "Our investment in you." Because I went on to do fourteen years on a major label. Never

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MINUTEMEN

RECORDS
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Photo: Glen E. Friedman



ROBERT IBARRA

had to submit ■ demo. That's all from the work with SST. I never took tour support. In fact, if you come from that, you probably expect it. Unless you're—what was that Johnny Rotten song?—careering. If you like these values, what attracted you to the movement in the first place, why are you going to give those things all up to be...?

Todd: At the gamble of becoming more popular.

Watt: Yes. Right. The dice roll. Autonomy, right? There's ■ Buzzcocks song.

Todd: You had a long history with Columbia, Sony/BMG, Legacy. You released ■ live record last year, *Ring Spiel Tour '95*. Take us through that process.

Watt: Tim Smith over there. I've known about this tape. That gig was twenty-two years ago. Joe Shanahan at Cabaret Metro—did many gigs for him. They used to video those gigs all of the time. So, there'd be a tape. So I knew it was around there. I never watched. It's hard to watch myself—all the clams (fuck up) and all that. But Tim Smith finds it and says, "Hey Watt, what about putting this out?" I thought about it. "It's been ■ lot of years. Is it relevant?" But then I was looking back at my—what do you call it?—career. [laughter] Careering, and it really is ■ sea change for me. Because up to that point, I'd really only been in three bands. Minutemen, of course. We lose D. Boon. Edward (Crawford, AKA "Ed from Ohio") comes. Basically, me and Georgie are doing with Edward what we did with D. Boon. FIREHOSE, and this one side proj (project). Dos, with K (Kira Roessler). Then after this, I do all these different things.

So it makes sense when I looked at it like that. I think it was a confidence builder. It was actually Dave Grohl's idea to get his band (Foo Fighters)—he made ■ record by himself, then he put a band around him to tour it. He's talking with Ed and Ed had this proj, too, with his wife, then. "Here Watt, we'll play. Open up, and we'll play with you for your set." So I'm driving around. It was a trippy thing. Much different thing. But standing in the middle, using my own name, total pants-shitter. Shit a pecan log. Strange thing, too, with those guys at that time. Lot of hype; not them ■■ guys.

Todd: Post-Nirvana.

Watt: So it was very strange, but you've got to man up. When I got through that—it was only twenty-seven days—I started doing other things instead of putting all the music through the one proj. I start making bands for proj's. It was different. I make one just for prac, called Madonnabes. They end up doing gigs later on. Because without FIREHOSE, I'm not prac'ing every day. Maybe it's from John Coltrane. I get to see his drummer fifteen times. Bassmen like Mr. Ray Brown and Cecil McBee.

Max Roach, I loved his counting-in. They were "and." Guys are like "One, two, one, two, three"—nah, Max Roach is "and!" and the band sits up all in ■ line and he's on the one end. That's one thing if I could change about the Minutemen—put George Hurley up front. Notice how I put Raul (Morales, Missingmen) up front?

Interesting thing about drums in Screamers, K.K. (Barrett) played with a drum machine. Weirdest company. Kind of

like ■ click track. Played good drums, but they had this other drum machine going at the same time. They were wild. I tell you one thing about the '70s scene, though. A lot of those people, when the '80s came: "It's over for us. We're done."

Todd: A lot of people disappeared.

Watt: Wasn't that many to start with. Then you had ■ younger shift, because in the old days, we were the youngest. We were thirteen. These kids are still going to school. Can you imagine the abuse, the belit, they had to put up with? We got it just on the streets. I can't imagine having to go to school and deal with that shit. I think that was one of the motivations to try to get one sound going, 'cause you gotta rally around something. But when everyone's freaking out, you have to think too much. You have to be choosy. Creativity is a big challenge. Maybe it's one of the enemies of ■ movement. Even if the name of the movement is something like anarchy, which is no coercion, no doing stuff you don't have to.

Todd: No masters.

Watt: Everyone put it out there. By accident, we're all playing the same songs. It happens with other genres, too. "Genres," see. All of a sudden. That's why I don't say that. I say, "movement." I can't imagine Minutemen being anything more than me and D. Boon just playing with each other, if it wasn't for the movement. No way. We wouldn't have even written songs. We'd still be trying to copy Blue Öyster Cult and Creedence (Clearwater Revival), off their records. So you've got to give credit where credit's due. I think it's all right to have



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BUT WE HAVE SO MUCH IN COMMON.

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TO PROVE THIS TO OURSELVES.

talks about it. I remember, it started with Tim's (Yohannan) magazine.

Todd: *Maximum Rockroll.*

Watt: When crust and dirge—kinda good adjectives, but then they turned into genres. Slots. And now there are things like powerviolence. I remember part of the sea change was when I was working for Porno For Pyros. Perry (Farrell), asking him about the dance, electronic. And he said you tell it apart by beats per minute. Isn't this trippy?

In writing, you have stuff called YA.

Todd: Young adult.

Watt: [laughs] I guess you use the letters because it's so embarrassing. I could imagine "children's book," right? Pictures, a lot. Not that many words. But, YA? You know how obviously silly that is, but with the music it's not so apparent. To me, it's like that.

Todd: Endless classification.

Watt: I found this is a problem with me—going to a gig, and I see a band for the first time. All of a sudden, there's parts of my mind that are looking for other bands' names, sounds, lyrics. I can't let these people do their expression in front of me without starting to build the gulag, putting up the barbed wire. The parts of my mind are doing this. Right away, I've got to give a name to it. "Why am I doing this?" Especially when I'm wearing these other clothes. I'm a big opponent of this kind of thing, and here I am doing it, involuntarily. At a gig, this thing I think is such a righteous celebration and I'm turning it into something Kafka-esque. [laughter] Actually, I don't think all of his stuff was heavy. Some stuff has to get funny enough to laugh at.

So, Minutemen, I remember whenever they asked D. Boon about the word "hardcore." We saw it first in Ian's (MacKaye) ads (Dischord). It was DC bands, too. I think they put out one record by a band that ain't in DC, but all the rest are DC. But it becomes this whole thing for everybody's town. In fact, Flag touring.

Todd: Planting the seeds.

Watt: Which was not a bad thing, not at all. In fact, only the Dils had a van. These bands, we didn't know them that well, personally. But it seemed like nobody was really into touring 'til Flag.

Todd: Seems like a lot of work.

Watt: Greg, SST, Solid State Transmitter. He did ham radio a teenager, so he talked to people in different towns.

Todd: I never put that together.

Watt: What I'm getting at is, human interactions—it's what makes things make things. So the way the Minutemen sounded, because of other punk rockers, other people in the movement—we weren't just by ourselves. We had some layers of by ourselves and reinventing the wheel, for us.

Barney (Rubble) doesn't talk exactly like Fred (Flintstone). But, oh what a coincidence, don't they sound a lot like fuckin' Ralph and Norton (*Honeymooners*)? You see what I'm getting at? When we're born—c'mon, everybody's got different thumbprints. We're born with the singular, but we have so much in common. That's why we need the arts, to prove this to ourselves. But then there's this other hankering, "Get the herd. Circle the wagons."

Todd: Surround yourself by like-minded people all the time.

Watt: It's trippy. In the '90s, I was touring so much—this period you're talking about with that record. In fact, in 2000 almost get killed by an infection. So I have to tour even more because that's \$36,000 to county. But, hey, they saved my life. Anyway, I didn't know what was happening in my own town. And Todd, another Todd.

Todd: Congelliere (F.Y.P., Toys That Kill).

Watt: People started moving to Pedro. Kid Kevin from Orange County. I find this guy Raul Morales. Vinny Vegas, actually from the hill. Dirk Vandenberg, who helped with *Double Nickels*; he's a hill guy.

Todd: Tell people what you mean by the hill.

Watt: Palos Verdes. That's our word for it.

Todd: It's uphill. Sure.

Watt: I don't think they're allowed to build street lights because they want to keep it kinda rustic. What I'm saying is that people moved to Pedro and Dirk was one of those early pioneers. I didn't know about the Porchcore on Fourth Street. Recess Records. Finally got to tour with Todd in February. We had a good time. It was just the West Coast, maybe ten gigs. But, finally. But this was something that was going on and I wasn't even aware of it because I'm in this other world. I come home to Pedro, just get on the bike or the kayak. I don't actually know that there's bands. Then I found out about it.

That's why I get the idea of the Missingmen. I want Raul to be the drummer. He actually comes saves the day because he had to be part of the second string Secondmen. When I finally toured the second opera (*The Second Man's Middle Stand*),

both of the Secondmen—which had actually come out of Madonnabes practice band.

A lot of this stuff, they're coincidental interactions of people. No big plan, except ■ fan of the movement. It's one thing that's always kept me in there. Never had ■ manager. I try to plan pieces, especially after the mid-'90s, the idea of proj's. I remember when I brought Edward "Piss Bottle Man." "Mike, do you think this is a song this band should be doing?" Actually, I got the music from "Pictures of Lily." Edward loved The Who, but I think the words tripped him out. Edward's like Georgie—sorta reminded ■ of The Stooges guys. Midwest. No front. Edward's from Ohio. They're just telling you what they think. And I think, "Maybe he's right. Not all my music goes through one thing." Start putting together other proj's. Start helping other people.

There's basically three ways, I found. For my operas, I come up with ■ idea. "Okay, this is who I want on the drum, this on the guitar." I'll use my name, even. So you know who to blame. Give them credit. Then there's the other way where you take direction. You're like your guys in the Missingmen or Secondmen. Stooges. J Mascis + The Fog. Porno For Pyros. And the third way is collaborate, like I do with the Italian guys, Il Sogno Del Marinaio.

I think it's healthy to do all three. If you're stuck doing ■ way—I know for sure, the sideman-itis. These guys get really frustrated. Yeah, they never get to write their own parts. They never get to do their own thing. They've got to make ■ living and they're sidemen, right?

Todd: They're technical.

Watt: Don't want to dehumanize them, but they're not the rudderman. They're more like the keel or the spars on the hull. Definitely not bow or rudder, okay? But how many hands do you want on that thing? Maybe it just takes one guy. The line between giving direction, taking direction, and collaboration is trippy. Groups of people have their own way of doing it.

The way I like the collaboration: "You write some songs. I'll write some songs. He or she will write some songs." No one dominates in songwriting. That's more the collaboration.

Some things—I remember going to the boss of Columbia. His ■ is Donny Ienner. Kind ■ to me. 550 Death Star was the AT&T building in Manhattan. It's just me and him at this table. No blinking, right? "Tell me what I'll want to hear." So I say, "Well, I want to make an opera about three guys in a boat." He goes, "Okay. Do it." [laughter] I couldn't believe it. So maybe dreaming by committee might have diluted that thing.

Here, I'm going to use a story of my pop's life in the navy to talk about the Minutemen and losing D. Boon (*Contemplating the Engine Room*). He trusted me with that. I don't know if I could have divvied it up, but I pick Steve Hodges, Nels Cline (Wilco). Both those guys, I never showed them the songs. There was fifteen parts, so each day I'd show

'em a new part. I'd tell 'em a story, the navy part, then the Minutemen part, because I used the Jim Joyce thing of the whole band's life is in one day. So we start ■ dawn and then we go to dusk.

So I'm rapping them and they're coming up with parts, just from my spiel. Something like that, it's really hard to piece out ■ ■ committee, to collaborate that way. I compose a lot on the bass, maybe ninety-five percent. Only Missingmen, I use guitar. I can't play very well anyway, ■ you don't want to hear it. Sometimes when the guitar comes first, it does sound different, like my third opera (*Hyphenated-Man*). When I compose with the bass, I try to make a launch pad. Springboard. Some dudes are like, "Whoah! There's not enough direction. I don't know where to go. It's like you wrote the song on the kick drum or cymbals. Give us something more." Then there's cats like Nels—they love it because you are giving them that freedom.

Actually, it goes back to playing with D. Boon. We learned together ■ boys. I never had to teach D. Boon ■ thing. You play it ■ and he'd get it. He'd play something for me, and right away—that's osmosis from growing up with ■ dude. You could never get that again, until the next life.

These things are valuable for me to keep things from being in the museum. To keep 'em like it's the first band you're in. I try to make that, all three of those ways. Sometimes you don't want to be the switchboard guy because you might be in the *I Love Lucy* re-run mode. This week it's mayonnaise. Next week, it's pizza. "Oh, Ricky!" Sometimes you want to let go. You come into the bass in another way.

I've got ■ kind of ethic that life's ■ classroom and everybody's got something to teach you. You gotta give 'em a chance. Put down your piece of chalk. Walk away from the blackboard. It's still hard. It's difficult another way. When some guy's trying to relate to you ■ musical idea and you're trying to do good for them, it's like, "Man, I wish I was writing this stuff." Everything, if you really put your heart in it, is difficult. Some people think it's easy to play for somebody else, but in a lot of ways, it's tough.

Todd: There's ■ lot of humility.

Watt: You wanna do it because you want to do good for them. Maybe if you go in like, "It's ■ or him," and somebody's got to win—which is crazy—especially if it's their band, if they really have respect for a cat.

I just made ■ Christmas record with Tav Falco.

Todd: Panther Burns.

Watt: I couldn't believe it. He asked me to do this ■ couple years ago out of the blue. Got a little Hofner Beatle Bass from China for \$250. Little flat-wounds. Wore ■ suit. Gianni Uomo. \$116. The most I've ever spent ■ clothes, probably, in my life, accumulative. [laughter]

My birthday and Christmas ■ right next to each other, so I always get the two pairs of Levi's. Guys, we can get the guts but we can still ■ them unless you really bell out. So

I've got thirty pairs of Levi's that have never been worn because I don't really like that dark blue crap. Anyway. So, I bought this suit for him. Because, why not? *Behind the Magnolia Curtain*—I love that record. Here is ■ guy, asking you to play for him.

Halloween's my favorite holiday because one day all year we admit we ■ costumes. I can still be Mike Watt, but playing in the Panther Burns. I think with bass, there is something about that role that's ■ little humility. Or, let's put it this way—most people, when they go in the head, they look at the tile. We're more like the grout. We're holding the tile together. While they're pissing and shitting, they're like, "Whoah, look at that tile." But me, I'm looking at the grout. It's set up good. So I think it's part of the physics.

Here's the other thing, like most human endeavors, the longer you do it, the more you want to do it. Well, physics punishes ■ bassists because we have big wavelengths. So if you put slots in notes, you get smaller. So it's always the struggle for the "correct" notes. It's not the most notes. You play too many notes on the bass, it gets really tiny. Of course, down the hallway there's fusion god. "C'mon, Watt."

What's great about that is ■ guy just starting can write ■ righteous line. In fact, I read something Stanley Clarke said. "Bass solo, easy. It's writing ■ good bass line—that's the hard part." How many years did it take him? I read this interview—a big label set up ■ thing for Charlie Mingus. "Newcomer Stanley Clarke." Charlie Mingus, no respect for electric bass. It's some toy. And he wants to teach Stanley Clarke "Take the A Train." Stanley Clarke's like, "I don't need to learn, 'Take the A Train.'" All this belig. People talk about aggression ■ a component of our movement. Look at that. Stuff that's going to end up as muzak in ■ elevator—maybe, I don't know what happened with that proj—I bet Mr. Clarke probably changed his mind. He probably could have learned it like that [snaps fingers]. The guy's ■ virtuoso.

One time, I think ■ stepdaughter of his ■ to ■ gig of mine and all she said to ■ was, "It sounds like you're fucking the bass." [laughter] It was, "Whoah. Okay. Glad to meet you."

So that's the way I look at it. You don't always want to be the switchboard guy. Shakespeare said, "Life's a stage and we're playing different roles." I think that's healthy.

Todd: Sponge ears.

Watt: And sometimes sponge mouth. Or exploder mouth. Or sprinkler, firehose. Maybe it's like that. Inhale, exhale. I don't mean to make things sound ■ binary, 'cause, actually, it's probably very multifaceted because of all the different personalities and people bringing different experiences to things. Just the idea of collaboration.

I love Stooges music. I never told them to change anything. I didn't even suggest it. "Hey, here are ■ new lyrics. Thinking about the 'T.V. Eye' song. Kinda catchy, but..."

Faloon: Did you ever think it? Ever have a moment where you're like, "I wonder if they thought about this?"

Watt: No, I didn't. I did have fear. I want to be buried at sea anyway, okay, so this is just a dream. There's this headstone, tombstone, and all it says, not even my name: "Fucked up a Stooges gig." [laughter] You know what I mean? A legacy. Talk about our movement. Like in the old days, we were talking about the '70s, the Val, the West Side, OC, Inland—one thing in common was Stooges. Not even Velvets. Stooges, everybody knew that band.

Todd: Absolutely.

Watt: And to get asked to help them, I felt like I owed them.

Todd: You did it for thirteen years?

Watt: 125 months, so that's ten years, five months. Because three of them are gone now. Very sad, very sad.

Todd: How did you playing for The Stooges come about?

Watt: It came about because of that sickness, in a way. It almost killed me. Okay, they put a hose, a Foley (catheter). It's a tube. It's got a ball on one end. Actually, there's no fuckin' fitting. There's a slit in there. When they opened me up, I had this infection that blew up. It's on the Hootpage. It's called the "Ill List." It's in the taint. Perenium is the doctor word. Luckily, we don't have much there. Ladies, a lot. It got all infected. The doc who saved my life, Doc Hopkins, he's in the second opera. He probably thinks it might have been from riding the bike. Ingrown hair and it should have been lanced.

Todd: That's it? From riding a bike?

Watt: But I'm getting treated with the wrong stuff. I found out the stuff they were giving me was for syphilis, VD stuff.

Todd: Which doesn't come from bicycle seats. I'm no doctor, though.

Watt: Anyway, going through all that, it gives you a certain urgency.

Todd: You see the end of things.

Watt: I was only forty-two. But I got the second opera out of it, you know what I mean? There's something about travails. I'm not telling anybody to make it rough for themselves on purpose. But this realm of expression can be like that.

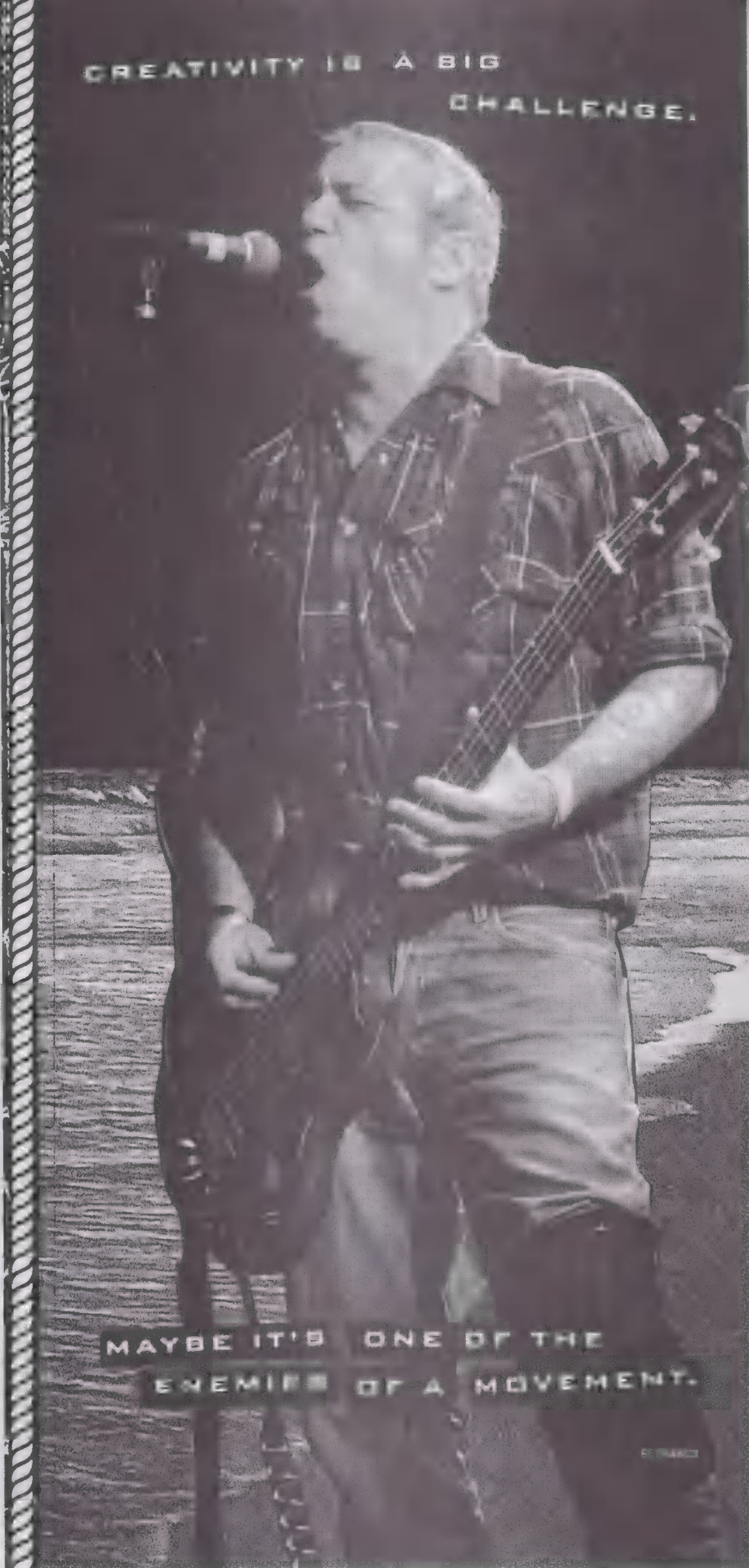
Stooges, not a lot of chord changes, right. There's a lot of feel in it.

Todd: A lot of pocket.

Watt: What I heard first, for me in my life, was *Funhouse*. *Creem* liked it and all the other ones didn't like it at that time. So I thought, "Oh, there must be something here." Richard Meltzer wrote for them. Not really a fanzine, but I would call it way more towards that way than... other stuff. They really didn't have peers. *Creem* was like, "We like certain stuff and we get into it." There's something that spoke to me that didn't speak from the other ones. I'm not even going to say their names. Some of them are still going, believe it or not.

Todd: They don't need credit.

Watt: "The man can't bust our music." The man paid for that ad, dude. Okay? Don't get me into that.



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Anyway, I've got two tubes in me. One's in the dick, one's coming through the bladder. 'Cause it tried to erode into my urethra. And the lining... anyway, it was righteous taking ■ piss. You just watch the sac fill up. It was the most wonderful thing in the world. [sad laughter]

Anyway, I couldn't play the bass because it's in the way. I hadn't stopped since D. Boon's ma put me on it when I was twelve. That's thirty years. Never stopped. Even when I had the knee surgery, it was not a problem.

Todd: Sit down.

Watt: Yeah, yeah. I fact, I even drove the Volkswagen. Thank god one of the knee surgeries was the second-to-last time Captain Beefheart played at the Whiskey. Cabaret Voltaire, I got to see them in a cast. And those are manual transmissions. I've got one leg that's ■ Lincoln Log.

But, this you couldn't do. My sister had to pull out—at first it was nine, ten yards of gauze. Because you had to heal from the inside out when they cut you open or you'll get infected. Blew out a big hole. That's what saved my life. It literally blew out and the doc cut two more holes in me. Basically, like wire brush. Had to get out all the infection. Oh, man, it was like ■ gallon of green pee. Pea soup-like, like the Andersen's crap. I remember once D. Boon had us stop there on the way to The City.

It had an odor to it. I put on Levi's, put in the newspapers, called Melinda. "You've gotta get me to the emergency room." It's in the second opera. I paralleled Dante's *Commedia* for that one. The paradise was getting to play the bass and paddle again.

I didn't know—with health—'till you lose it, you can't do anything. It just overwhelms. You think you can just man up. No.

Todd: You're living in your head all the time.

Watt: Up to that point, thirty-eight days of fever. Even after the surgery, no conking (sleeping) for another three, four months. This twilight kind of thing. While the holes were healing, they never were closed. My sister, being so clean and helping me—county sent ■ nurse and she could tell by the smell that Melinda was doing good. She's in the second opera, too. What'd I say there? I say, "Starting ■ lawn mower and stuffing ■ turkey." [nervous laughter]

Faloon: Wow.

Watt: No shame. She's only ■ year and ■ half younger than me. Very close. She's Saint Melinda in the opera. So I come through that. When they get the tube out—that was Doctor Koh. I remember he started getting me to laugh and stuff and he just yanked that motherfucker out. He whipped it around his back. I saw it. It was not a softball size, but ■ hardball. Also the dick one. They were two different things. Yeah, yeah, fuck.

Anyway, I'm starting to play bass again and I can't do it. I lost it, man. No rhythm. No strength. Atrophy, right? No groove. So I start doing Stooges. "Little Doll" over and over. I found out that David Michael Alexander, Stooges bass player. Me, Michael David Watt. I find out Ronnie (Ron Asheton)—because he's actually Ronnie's buddy—he got the lick from Pharoah Sanders, "Upper Egypt, Lower Egypt." "T.V. Eye" got the Motown snare on the one. That's why it doesn't sound old. Mixes ■ lot of stuff. *Funhouse* sounded like it could have been recorded next week. It's incredible.

So I start playing this and then I get this notion, "You gotta get back in the saddle, Watt. Get on the horse." So, I put together some gigs that's just going to be Stooges songs. I do with two of the guys from Porno—Steve Perkins, Peter DiStefano, and they called it Hell Ride because Perk lives in the Val. Thirty-eight miles. And when I was helping Porno, they were in that house, *The Last Waltz* (Martin Scorsese's documentary on The Band). It's Malibu. That was like fifty-nine miles. So they were hell rides, so that's what they called the band.

Back east, I do one with J Mascis and Murph from Dinosaur (jr). Kind of like with Cream added, so they do big freakouts in the middle. I just wanted to go off and play. I did some with Nels Cline and Kevin Fitzgerald, too. I thought it was, "The real

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oh, my." It's "oh, mind"—out of your mind. The funny thing about that song ("Down on the Street"), too, it was called "Down on the Beach." Scottie told me this. "Where the faces shine, floatin' around." Thinking of the beach, but Scottie's (Asheton) like, "We're in Ann Arbor. There's no beach." So Scottie says he actually renamed that song.

"I Wanna Be Your Dog"—"that girl's pretty." They had slang words.

Ig (Iggy Pop), his **name** comes from being a drummer.

Todd: The Iguanas.

Watt: He wants to be a singer, so he teaches Scottie. A lot of times, even though Ronnie was older, Ig always deferred to Scottie—'cause there was three of 'em, right?—he was always the rudder guy. He's very stoic. Not eighty words a minute. Way into nature. Ronnie, more history. Ig, culture. Steve, politics. Really interesting guys.

I know the name Stooges—actually, they were first called Psychedelic Stooges. They told me when they got signed they called them (Three Stooges) up and got permission from them. "Just don't say, 'Three Stooges,' but you **can** use Stooges." And then Larry (Fine), at the old folk's home for Hollywood people, Ronnie took care of him. Got him cigarettes and stuff because he didn't have anybody visiting him.

I think with Stooges, there's just such an image. I'd never been in a ditch like that. I've always been with D. Boon, Georgie, with equals. I've never been the little brother. The guy who **was** last. The guy who's learning about a world he never was a part of. Really no progenitor issues, 'cause I'm the caboose. And happy to be there, believe me. But it was trippy dynamic.

Anyway, doing these gigs after this sickness, and J puts out this album as J Mascis + The Fog. He played everything, but he wants to tour it—sorta like Grohl. He wants a band. And he said, "Watt, I liked what we did with that Stooges stuff and I hate singing every song, every night. So why don't you come on and learn my songs—and a couple Dinosaur songs—but we'll do Stooges songs, too." And "I've Had It," the Black Flag song.

I'm going on tour with J Mascis, still healing up down there, the whole rigamaroo. But I'm playing and I'm getting my thing back. He has me play with a pick. Well, I didn't really hear any notes. J plays loud. But I hadn't played with a pick in seventeen years, so that was a challenge. A Fuzzbox. I even tried using boxes for my second opera.

J Mascis, not a big talker. Incredible music mind and righteous cat.

We get to Ann Arbor, the Blind Pig. "Hey, you know Ronnie." Because I got to make a soundtrack movie with him. There was this movie, Todd Haynes. *Velvet Goldmine*. It's got one guy who's like a David Bowie and one guy's who's kind of a cross between Kurt Cobain and Ig.

Todd: Huh.

Watt: Yeah. Strange. Anyway, the music guys get this idea. "Why don't we get Ronnie to write songs?" since one of the guys has got Ig? They got Steve Shelley (Sonic Youth) because he's actually from Michigan. The middle. Michigan, they always show you the hand. Then they asked me to do the bass. I got to sit right **next** to Ronnie in the studio. I remember him playing "T.V. Eye." I'm hearing it and I'm seeing it. Because it was only a record to me. He came to my gigs—Minutemen, FIREHOSE—Saint Andrews in Detroit. So, I'd met him a few times. But here I'm actually playing with him. He **was** really into Pretty Things, so we covered some Pretty Things. He wouldn't play anything off the third record.

So J, "You know Ronnie. You played with him. Call him up." So I call him up and, "C'mon down." So the last third of the gig is Stooges songs with Ronnie, and J really digs it. "C'mon tour with us." So we're touring with Ron Asheton. First two-thirds is J's stuff. Then we do Stooges with Ronnie. So Ig heard. No, what happens is **that** we do a year of that and there's a van accident. J breaks his back so he can't play. Oh, no. I'm getting a little ahead of myself.

Remember there was All Tomorrow's Parties festivals? There was one at UCLA and Thurston (Moore, Sonic Youth) was a curator. "Hey Ronnie, you're already playing with J. Scottie's living in his truck. We'll rent a drumset. You can play with both the Asheton brothers." So we do this thing called Asheton, Asheton, Mascis & Watt. Some of them are in Europe.

Ig's doing his solo. He hears about it and he calls Ronnie up. He says, "This indie guy is stealing my treasure." And Ronnie said, "Treasure? You know my number. You could have called me up." Scottie would call almost every year. In fact, he jammed with him once. But Ronnie and Ig didn't talk. But Ig's way into it. He brings them in to make three songs on *Skull Ring*, his last Ig record at that point.

As of March, 2003, I'm on tour with my Secondmen in Tallahassee. I think it's the second Cow Haus. After sound check, "Hey Watt, it's the phone." And it's fuckin' Ig. Now, I had played with Ig once, up here. There was something called The Shortlist Awards. Short-lived. Only lasted one year. But, anyway, the guys from a Swedish band called The Hives—two of them they brought over. They made Ig a judge. "But why don't you, Watt, teach these guys three Stooges songs?" Pete Yorn played the drums. Pete did good. And I played with Ig. It was a trip. Freaky thing like that.

How much longer is this? About a year and a half later. Total coincidence. But maybe

not. Maybe I got called because they knew I did this with Asheton, Asheton, Mascis & Watt. I don't know why people call me up to do things. [laughs] "You want to play with Ig?" "Oh yeah, baby. Toot, toot Philadelphia, I'm right there." Anyways, it's the phone. "Hey Mike, Ronnie says you're the man." And I fuckin' look at the phone. I just could not believe it. "Will you—instead of wearing a flannel—would you wear a T-shirt?" And I said, "Fuck yeah!" It was John Fogerty's idea, anyway. I go, "What about Levi's and Converse?" He goes, "That's strong."

And then he talked about lighting. A weird dream he had, where the drummer was in lime green and the bass guy was wearing orange. Just freaky. He was going to have good lighting on the stage, then we get to the music. He goes, "Look, however we end the songs, that's how we end 'em." I didn't know what that fuckin' meant. But, if you listen to the first album, maybe half or more fade out. That's what he was talking about, because there's no real endings, okay? You listen close to Ig. He ain't wasting your time. But, at first, I'm on tour, I'm just wondering about this.

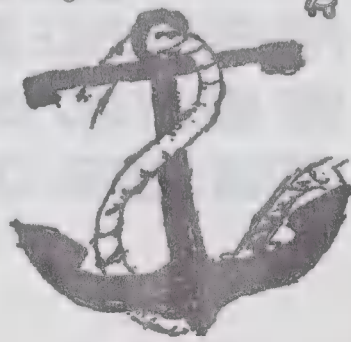
I leave my guys a couple weeks later in Memphis and I fly to Coachella. I got sick on the way. Kind of a comeback of that shit. Fever in me. Vitamin B. Flea (Red Hot Chili Peppers) said they do it when they get sick. So they put that in **the** and the fever—the fever was so bad on me, I was shaking. I didn't tell those guys. I stayed away. I didn't want them to know. It was like a twenty-foot pool cue was up my yang.

I remember the wind blowing Ronnie's amps over. We get going into "Dirt," and Ig stops the song, comes over to me, goes, "Are we in the right key?" I said, "Yeah." He said, "Start it again." The whole thing was surreal. And then I got to do 125 months.

That's how it happened. Kind of coincidence. Kind of J Mascis, but J's shy. He don't brag about that kind of stuff. Obviously, Ronnie. Obviously, Ig. Scottie, when they got the Hall of Fame shit, we actually did it twice because Madonna asked us to do some songs when she got in. Scottie at the microphone said, "You know, Watt was never a Stooge, but he could have been one." And for me, that was really heavy, because I'm not from their time. They're responsible, big time, for a lot of our movement.

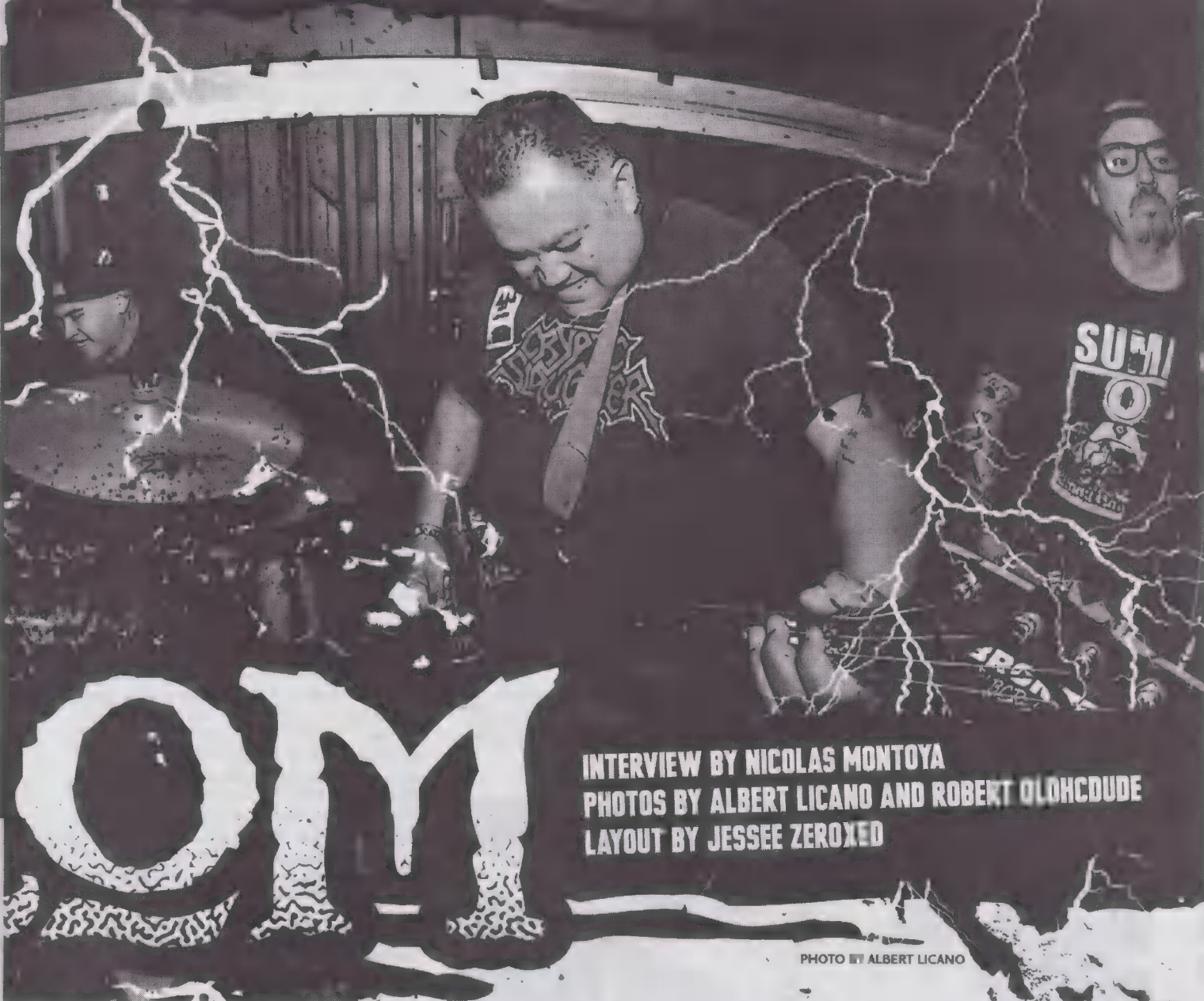
Todd: Absolutely.

Watt: But they're not really of us. Well, the humanity ways, they are. But they're from another era. A different time. That was trippy, but it made a lot of sense. Humanity has to win out over these other borders, these other categories.





FOR THE PAST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS, CROM HAVE BEEN A BARBARIAN FIST IN THE FACE OF THE MUSIC INDUSTRY. THE BAND, WHICH SHARES THEIR NAME WITH THE FICTIONAL GOD IN ROBERT E. HOWARD'S CONAN STORIES, DEVASTATES ITS LISTENERS WITH SHEER SONIC, BARBARIC BRUTALITY. CROM HAVE BECOME A LEGENDARY NAME IN THE LOS ANGELES POWERVIOLENCE SCENE OVER THE YEARS. WHETHER THEY ARE RUMMING OUT BECK FANS AS HIS OPENING ACT OR ATTEMPTING TO EAT THEIR OWN GUITAR CABLES, CROM ARE A MUSICAL FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH.



INTERVIEW BY NICOLAS MONTOKA
PHOTOS BY ALBERT LICANO AND ROBERT OLOHCUDE
LAYOUT BY JESSEE ZEROXED

PHOTO BY ALBERT LICANO

The band's sound is an intense amalgamation of '90s-era powerviolence (blisteringly short and fast songs full of blast beats and vocal cord-shredding screams) fused with heavy thrash riffs that lay waste to listener's eardrums. This, combined with tons of audio samples and a running undercurrent of self-deprecating humor, makes the band easily enjoyable for fans of heavy music (at least those who don't take themselves too seriously).

Crom shows are often violent, alcohol- and drug-fueled gatherings of chaos that leave audience members beaten, bloody, and begging for more. But Crom's history as a band has been just as chaotic as their shows. Numerous lineup changes, touring issues, and a general affinity for substance abuse have hindered the band's success. But with die-hard fans who stick around like S.T.D.s and the musical chops to create genuinely good heavy music, Crom battles on.

On a sunny Saturday afternoon, I made my way down a quiet residential street in El Sereno, Calif., towards Crom guitarist Phil Vera's house to interview the band. The atmosphere of the calm neighborhood [was a stark contrast from the city-leveling assault Crom's sound inflicts on its listeners. Armed with a sixer of Mickey's fine malt liquor and a notebook, I trudged up the driveway. I was filled with apprehension as I stood outside the door. Would I be smashed under the weight of a Cimmerian Warhammer? Or perhaps cleaved in twain by a longsword? Quite the opposite.

I was met by Phil's mother who was on her way out after a visit and was greeted warmly by a limping Phil who had recently sustained a knee injury. We made our way inside where we met guitarist Scott Bag who was quietly sitting on a couch strumming an acoustic guitar. Cracking open a few beers, we made our way out to the well-manicured backyard where we were joined by bassist

Andre Soto and later drummer Jay Castro. Vocalist Will Crom was unfortunately stuck in the treacherous Los Angeles traffic.

NM: To begin, please describe Crom in three words.

Andre: Violent diarrhea attack.

Scott: Out of shape

Jay: Fucking bad ass.

Phil: Dog dick beach.

NM: Give me some background on Crom.

Phil: Crom started in 1992 or 1993. It was Will and me. We hit up Andre to get a hold of this other friend of ours to play bass. He told us that the guy was a flake and that he'd play for us instead. So the three of us started playing. I wouldn't say it was instant chemistry because it was just a bunch of horseshit in the beginning. But it was fun. Then we recorded a demo at the end of '93 or beginning of '94 at the KXLU radio station. At the time I was already good friends with Chris Elder (owner of Pessimiser Records

and vocalist in Despise You). He was just starting his label, and his band Despise You was just forming. So that's when we did the Crom/Despise You split 7".

NM: So, officially, the band has been around for about twenty-five years?

Phil: Yeah. Cheap Trick has still been playing longer than us, though.

Andre: We played our first show at our friend Kevin's house. He went to U.C. Riverside and had a house out there. We did this Crom prayer before we played. I remember all of us took a knee on the lawn to pray to Crom. These guys [points to Phil] were smoking coco puffs. This was right before the set so they were fuckin' zooted. They just ran in and started playing. We were playing the songs really fast and I'd stop where they were supposed to end, but these guys just kept playing. So I said "fuck it," and just jumped right back in with them. There were these jocks who lived there. They were total bros. They were screaming at us "You guys fuckin' suck!" And we were like "You better believe it." They were so bummed.

Phil: Initially, when we started, we would mainly play punk shows and whatever kind of similar stuff. But then we started getting all these weird shows. We played art shows or with hip-hop dudes, all kinds of random shit. We played with Hiram. That was fucking amazing.

Scott: I remember trying to stay sober to see Hiram.

Andre: That didn't happen. We were fucked up. We played with Beck once.

NM: How did that come together?

Andre: It was right before he blew up. Our friend thought it would be funny to have a grindcore band open for a folk band. I think it was sponsored by KROQ. It was a Christmas show so we decided to come out in pajamas. I was in my mother-in-law's pajamas, and I'll never forget there were these little girls there who were like thirteen and they were sitting on the floor Indian style with backpacks on waiting for Beck to come out. We came out first playing all our shit, and it was just bumming everyone out. They had flowers for Beck.

Phil: Yeah, we smashed their flowers. We almost got in a fight. Some dude wanted to kill us.

NM: Does Crom usually bum audiences out?

Phil: It depends. Sometimes the Crom audience bums the other audience members out. They just get a little wild. It seems like the shows where we have the most fun are the smaller ones where people are right there in front of us. We've played the stage, and sometimes it's okay. But most of the time it just doesn't work. It just doesn't feel the same.

Andre: We play on the floor. We interact with the crowd a lot.

Phil: We played on stage at the Fox Theater in Pomona. It just didn't work.

Andre: Yeah the crowd was like way over there [points across the yard]. It just sucks.

Scott: We're not for that kind of environment at all.

Andre: Mastodon was there. We bummed them out pretty hard. They were fuckin' hating us.

Scott: Before people knew who we were, it was a lot easier to bum them out. Now people are in ■ the joke, so they want to help. At this point we've kind of passed the torch to the crowd. We just try to play the songs without getting our shit broken by them or having beer poured all over our gear.

NM: Does the audience play a big role at Crom shows?

Scott: It's their band at this point

Andre: The way I see it is that they're part of the band just ■ much as we are. If they feel like they need to shit their pants and go crazy in the middle of a fuckin' show, that's the whole point of us playing.

Scott: It's a place where they can do it.

Phil: The last show we played was really good. Everyone was really into it. It was the perfect crowd.

Scott: It was cool too because there were people taking responsibility for us, and making sure that we didn't get fucked with. That was a first. Usually everyone is after us.

Andre: We're after them, too.

Phil: This one time, Will wore this Raiders poncho to play ■ show at Alex's Bar. I remember he was so stoked on this poncho. But it turned out to be his undoing. Everyone was grabbing at it, and it was only connected around his neck. They basically turned it into a noose. People were choking him left and right. He ended up getting dogpiled on. Over the years, shows have been a lot like that.

Scott: A lot of times before our shows, people start hitting us up telling us about this drug and that drug that they're going to bring. And sometimes I just want to play the show. But in that situation, if we're there and someone comes up with drugs for us, we take 'em. You have to keep up appearances otherwise people will think you've sold out. [laughs]

Andre: There are Crom fans who show up who don't really listen to metal or punk. But they hear that there's ■ Crom show coming up, so they hold onto that one Vicodin or whatever. Then they take it at our show and go completely nuts. Then we don't see them for another year.

NM: Has the crowd at Crom shows evolved over the years?

Phil: It really depends on the show.

Scott: Also how often we play. It seems like if we don't play for a really long time, the show is fuckin' scary. But if we play too often, that same guy who was saving the



LET'S MAKE IT WEIRD.

**IT'S LIKE POWER VIOLENCE
JIMMY BUFFETT.**

Vicodin already took it at the last show, ■ you know.

Phil: We just started playing again last year, and our next show will be the third since then. Two to three shows ■ year isn't that bad. I don't want to play too much. We get asked to play shows a lot but we tend to turn most of the offers down. If we play too often it takes away from the events.

Scott: When it's strategically okay for ■■ to play, we do it. We all have other shit going on in our lives. We're not clamoring for shows, but it's definitely cool to be in the position to choose what we do or don't want to play. We were supposed to play some skate shop in Alhambra and it was looking like it was going to be cool because it was in ■ tiny space. Then they told us that they wanted to move it to ■ bigger place. So we said forget it. We wanted to play in ■ skate shop.

Phil: We were sold on the skate shop.

Scott: Yeah, I didn't want to play ■ venue

BEFORE PEOPLE KNEW WHO WE WERE, IT WAS A LOT EASIER TO BOM THEM OUT.

with fuckin' door people, security, and ■ bar. Let's make it weird.

Andre: Those kind of shows just don't work for us. The less security, the better. Our shows are like ■ big party. It's like powerviolence Jimmy Buffett. People bring their own alcohol, their own drugs, their own ice chests. I like it like that.

NM: Crom has had a number of drummers over the years. How did you get hooked up with your current drummer Jay?

Phil: I went to some Cave State (one of the many bands that Jay plays in) practices and we were just bullshitting. Jay told ■■ that he really loved the *Cocaine Wars* album and that he was a big fan of Crom. He said that if we ever needed a drummer that he'd want to play. I figured it might be cool to jam with ■■■ drummer but kind of forgot about it for a while. Then, later on, I saw his brother at a show and he told me that Jay still wanted to play with us. So I said, "Fuck it, let's just ■■ how it goes." Initially, he was pretty nervous, but he got it really quick.

Andre: Yeah, that last practice was like—"Fuck dude, this is awesome."

Phil: He gets it if you say Slayer-fast, or DRI-fast, or Cryptic Slaughter-fast. When I make those distinctions, they make sense to me. We've played with drummers who can only play one style of fast.

NM: So his drumming is dynamic?

Phil: Yeah, very dynamic.

Scott: I've always wanted ■ drummer who's really good at blast beats. Other people that we've had in the band can kind of do them, but not for that long. Jay loves doing them.

Phil: He makes good faces while he does them. [laughs]



NM: When was the last time Crom toured?

Phil: 2007 was the last tour. We played a bunch of shows up the West Coast. Seattle, Portland, Bakersfield. Little runs, really. But we never really toured to begin with. They're more like mini-tours.

Andre: We made it to Portland from El Sereno in fourteen hours. Our old drummer said he would get ■■ there—no problem ■■ long as he had coke. Sure enough, in fourteen hours we were there.

Scott: I was behind him in the van, and I had set up lines on a CD case. I'd bring it around in front of his head with the straw.

Andre: He had a meltdown there at the end, though. He started crying and shit.

NM: What is the origin of the name Crom?

Phil: There was this fuckin' dude who I went to school with. I have to give him props. He was this dude from Colorado. I think his name ■■■ Chris. A year or so before we started doing all this shit, he would always go around saying Crom. I knew what he was talking about from Conan, and I always thought it was pretty funny. This one time he told me that he thought Crom would be a badass name for a band. So he was the guy who put it in my head.

Then when me and Will got together to talk about ■ name, I mentioned it. He knew what it was from and—boom—that was it. But now there's this Crom in Germany. It's like a Viking metal band. If you go on Last.fm and check out the comment section under Crom you'll ■■ all these comments like, "Crom is gay." Or, "The only true Crom is the Viking Crom." Then down ■ way you'll see someone say, "Go Raiders." You know it's ■■ of our fans.

Scott: The fans are actually pretty balanced on there. There ■■ certain people who have asked me what we sound like. So I'll direct them to a YouTube video. Then I'll look at the comments and people are arguing on there too. Shit like, "This is not the good Crom [in European accent]." Or, "Yes it is! Shut up, asshole." But the good thing is that our fans are such dicks that they can go round for round with them.

[Jay removes bong from drum bag.]

Andre: God damn, girl!

Jay: Green hell.

Phil: What's cool is that people who are into Crom are really into Crom. If they get it, they really are into it.

Scott: I've been in ■ ton of bands and Crom is the only band that I've ever been asked about on ■ tour. Nobody has ever asked about any of my other bands. They just all want to know if I'm still in Crom, which is kind of rad.

Jay: I just joined the band and people are asking me if I'm in Crom. I'm like—"Oh shit, I've only played like two shows."

Scott: You're not saying yes yet, are you?

Jay: I tell them I'm still doing the background check.

NM: Are the members of Crom fans of Robert E. Howard's original Conan stories?

Phil: Yeah, I have ■ few of the old books

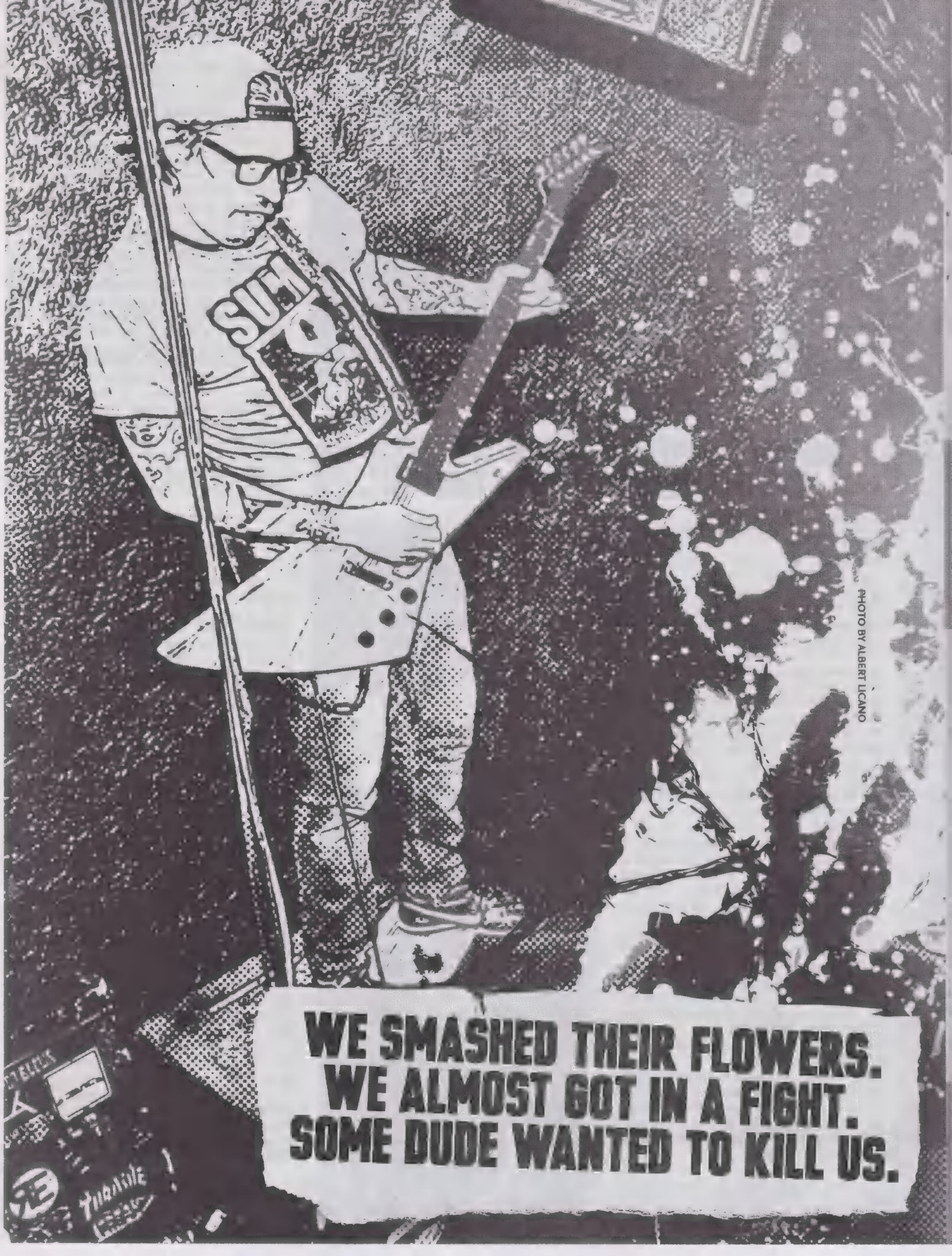


PHOTO BY ALBERT LICANO

**WE SMASHED THEIR FLOWERS.
WE ALMOST GOT IN A FIGHT.
SOME DUDE WANTED TO KILL US.**



like *Savage Sword of Conan*, *Usurper*, and a few of the old comics.

Andre: I have a lot of the old pulp stuff that he put out.

NM: If Robert E. Howard were to listen to a Crom record, what would he think?

Andre: He would probably hate it. But at the same time, he was out of his fuckin' mind so he might be into it.

Phil: Depending on the day.

Andre: He might hate it in the morning and love it in the evening. He was fuckin' out to lunch.

Phil: If we referred to him as Clint E. Howard, he'd probably get totally pissed.

NM: If Conan listened to Crom, what would he think?

Phil: He'd probably think it's pretty savage.

Andre: Yeah, definitely brutal enough to fuck shit up to.

Scott: He's from a place with no electricity or anything, so he'd be like—"What the fuck is this?" He'd be watching the CD spin, calling it witchery.

Phil: He'd probably call it thunderdust. He might smash it.

Scott: It would be for the best.

NM: The covers of *The Cocaine Wars 1974-1989* and *Hot Sumerian Nights* look similar to Frank Frazetta's style of art. I've heard that ■ relative of Phil's is the artist responsible for the covers.

Phil: Yeah, my dad actually did them.

Jay: [Hits bong and coughs violently.] Wanna go to green hell?

Phil: He's ■ commercial artist. He draws for film and TV. He's been doing that for thirty-five, forty years or so. He's also ■ fine artist. He worked on a shitload of movies. I wish he kept some of the shit from when he first started. He worked for a company called AIP—American International Pictures. They did ■ bunch of '70s exploitation films, and he drew ■ lot of the early ideas for those films.

Scott: He did the OG *Wet Hot American Summer* poster—the ■■■■ that's all *Mad Magazine* style.

Phil: When I approached him about doing a Crom album, I asked him if we could do it Frazetta style. He ■■■■ on the same page. We wanted ■ guy doing coke in the snow and he ■■■■ the ■■■■ who suggested having him do a line off ■ dagger. On the cover of *Hot Sumerian Nights* he made sure that there was some coke residue across the guys' mustaches. It's kind of cool to have that outlet. He's my dad and he's cool ■ shit.

NM: Crom doesn't seem to release new music very often. Are there any plans for a new release?

Phil: We were writing some shit with our last drummer, but all that just fell apart. I've been working ■■■■ getting the old demo together. Will from To Live A Lie Records told me he ■■■■ down to release whatever and we've been talking about putting something out with all the old 7" songs—the songs from the comps and ■ bunch of other shit that we never released. As for new shit, we haven't sat down and started fuckin' around yet.

NM: I was at Wooden Tooth Records in Tucson, Ariz. earlier this year, and saw a poster for ■ documentary called *Crom: All Hail Those Who Fail*, which had premiered there. I've been unable to find out much about it aside from ■ couple trailers and one interview online. Tell ■■■■ about the film.

Phil: Originally it was supposed to be just a short film about our trip to the East Coast. It was going to be a little mini-video. But then it just started snowballing into this thing that covered our backstory and everything else.

Scott: Then PK (PK Ripper, the film's director) started asking everyone we know for footage and interviews. Literally everyone. Eventually we had to tell him to stop bothering our friends.

Phil: I'm over it.

NM: Why is that?

Scott: The director is real responsible [sarcastically].

Andre: Yeah, he's not one of our favorites.

Phil: I really don't know what his ultimate goal or plan is for the film and it's been so long. I haven't seen it. It's only screened once, and they [points to Scott and Andre] got to see it. It's like either show it or don't. I don't fuckin' care anymore. It's supposedly going to premier in New York before one of our upcoming shows.

Scott: Will is going to lose his mind if he finds out.

Andre: I'm going to fuckin' say that Will is going to take a swing at PK when he ■■■■ him.

Scott: I can't wait to ■■■■ that. But what's fucked up is that PK is ■ good fighter.

Andre: He really is. He's going to beat the shit out of Will.

Phil: We'll have to jump in and stop it. We'll let him get maybe six good hits to Will's face, but that's enough. Maybe one more.

Scott: But it's really not our movie. It's PK's movie. It's just about us. It's not something that we really have anything to do with other than being interviewed in it. If we were involved with it, that would be one thing, but we've been totally kept away from it. The reason we went to Tucson was because none of us had seen it.

Andre: Yeah, we shot out there and actually had ■ good time at the premier. The whole weekend was great. We ended up at some weird rave after the screening.

Scott: I threw up twice during the movie.

Andre: Literally. We were laughing and all the sudden he was puking all over the floor.

Scott: I was on the screen being interviewed and I'm going [makes puking noises]. There was also this guy in the audience who was there by himself. He looked like he was on acid with speed in it or something and at full volume he kept saying, "I thought this movie was supposed to be about the raves." And he just kept saying that like every five minutes. Eventually we were like—"Dude, we're trying to watch this movie." But he just kept at it. And sure enough we end up at a rave with that guy by the end of the night. I was like fuck this town, man. [laughs] But it ended up okay.

After the Tucson premier, I asked the director what the plan ■■■■ for the film, like if he was going to take it to New York or L.A. But he pretty much said he was just going to look for work. It's like, "You're going to show this in Tucson and that's it?" This whole ten-year project was just to impress his college friends.

NM: In the twenty-five years that Crom has been ■ band, what has been its greatest achievement?

Scott: Has there been one? That's kind of ■ depressing question.

Andre: We invented the PCP show.

NM: What's a PCP show?

Andre: It's when you play ■ show on PCP. [All laugh.]

Phil: Our snow globes are pretty impressive.

Scott: Maybe some of our greatest achievements have been pulling things off, like little tours. It's like herding cats with us.

Phil: To get us through a weekend ■■■■ is like corralling twenty roaches in your kitchen. That last East Coast tour ■■■■ good. I pulled into my driveway coming home from work. We were leaving that evening. I looked on the lawn, and Will is face down in the grass. I went over and woke him up. I was like, "What the hell are you doing?" He rolled over and told me he got dropped off because he knew we were leaving and wanted to make sure he showed up. For the whole tour he had packed ■ tall can of Budweiser and his jacket.

Scott: And ■ Lil Wayne CD.

Andre: No, he had ■■■■ Emperor CD and a Lil Wayne CD. Those ■■■■ his two favorite CDs at the time.

Scott: His packing for the trip ■■■■ fuckin' Vons plastic bag with a tall boy and ■■■■ CDs.

Phil: For ■ ten-day tour.

Andre: No clothes. I had to buy him shoes. He was playing in flip flops. I figured, we're already from L.A. People probably already hate us. We didn't need him playing in flip flops.

Scott: But just to get back to how that question started—the fact that we made it home alive and fulfilled our obligations to the best of our ability was ■ feat within itself.

Phil: That Cake Shop show in New York was good, too. I had ■ complete meltdown.

Scott: Yeah, that was crazy. We got there at like 6 AM. By 10 AM friends ■■■■ already showing up with drug deliveries and beers. We were fucking wasted by eleven. We have a lot of old friends who work in press and stuff in New York. You know, people who actually do shit. So all this press ■■■■ supposed to come out. But our set kept getting pushed back so we just kept drinking. We didn't end up going on until—I don't even remember.

Andre: 2 AM. We were faded by 11 AM.

Scott: By the time we go on, the place had filled up with cameras and there were all these people documenting everything. And we couldn't even get through ■ song. Initially, we were holding it down, but RD (former drummer) was coming off of drugs and was taking forever to set up. We were playing and yelling at him to hurry the fuck up. Finally, when ■■■■ got started, me and

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RD was solid. Then Phil comes in and I'm in a completely different key and a completely different timing. So I had to figure out if he was fucking around—we like to fuck around with the songs when we play live. And then it just kept happening and none of it was the song.

Phil: Then I fell into the audience. We did maybe three songs—well, tried to do three—and eventually I just started trying to eat my guitar cable.

Scott: He tried to throw his wallet into the crowd. Someone stopped him.

Phil: Then I started taking RD's set apart.

Scott: He was playing air guitar on one of the cymbal stands, and threw one of his pedals at my head. Luckily, I bent down. They said if it had connected, it would've killed me. The whole time this is going on—we had made a CD for the set that starts with wind and this fanfare. It was timed to where things would happen as we played along with the CD. That was always the goal—to do that shit live with the samples.

Phil: So while all this shit is going on, there are all these little bells going off and this [makes loud whooshing wind noise].

Scott: And we're just walking around like—"I don't know what's going on" [in drunken voice]. Then Andre fuckin' bails.

Andre: I went to the bar.

Scott: Like the second things started going wrong, he just goes to the bar and starts drinking. And there are all these people from all these media outlets just like—"What the fuck is going on?" Most of them were my friends, and I'm just like—"I don't know." It wasn't theater. We were really that fucked up.

Phil: We sold the most merch that night.

NM: That sounds like a success story to me.

Scott: For us, definitely. The rad thing was

that unlike any other band, the next day one was bummed at all. It was just, whatever.

NM: Where does Crom see itself twenty-five years from now?

Phil: Done.

Scott: Done.

Andre: Hopefully done. I really want to be done.

Scott: I mean, it just gets sad after a point.

Andre: I can't believe we're still alive.

Phil: I definitely want Crom to have an ending. No reboot either.

Scott: We have a plan for the ending, but we can't talk about it here.

Phil: There is a loose plan, but we wouldn't want to give it away.

Scott: I can't wait for this shit to end. [laughs]

NM: If Crom didn't exist, where would you guys be right now?

Phil: Probably sitting here bullshitting. Just not playing. Like if we didn't have practice, we'd probably just be hanging out having some beers.

Scott: Barbecuing or something.

NM: If there was any band that Crom could face in a death match, what band would it be?

Andre: We'll take on any band.

Scott: What's another old people band with one young guy in it?

Phil: Despise You (Phil's other band). I'd be stuck in between probably trying to stop it at first.

Scott: [To Phil] You'd be beating yourself up.

Phil: I'm pretty good at that. We played basketball against Excruciating Terror once.

Andre: And we won.

Phil: Yeah we beat 'em. We always wanted to play Spazz.

Andre: Our goal was to play against Spazz. We would've beat their asses too.

Phil: The gauntlet has been thrown—Dodge, Dan, Max—get the fuck out here with a couple subs and let's figure it out.

Scott: We'll have a weak spot because I'm not good at sports at all.

Andre: Actually Will's pretty good. He's a good shooter.

Phil: Will plays.

NM: How does Crom fit into Donald Trump's America?

Andre: I'd say we're to Trump's America. Cryptic Slaughter was to the Reagan Years.

Phil: We have pretty similar slogans. He has, "Grab 'em by the pussy." We have, "Shoot arrows, eat pussy."

Andre: We've called our singer Trump. Will's white and he's an asshole. But he has no money.

NM: Does Crom have a philosophy?

Andre: Shoot arrows, eat pussy. As far as I'm concerned, or, a finger in the ass is better than two in the eyes.

Phil: Why you crying for?

NM: Lastly—kill, marry, or fuck using only the members of Crom.

Jay: For sure, I'd marry Andre. [All laugh.] I'd kill Will, and have a threesome with Phil and Scott.

Scott: Kill myself. Marry myself. Fuck the world.

Phil: Kill Will, of course. Marry Andre because he would take care of me. And fuck Scott, because I know he's into some weird shit. Getting things stuffed in his ass.

Scott: I'm a freak.

Andre: Kill Will without question. Sister wives with Phil and Jay. Fuck Scott because I'd get whatever I wanted.

TOP FIVES

RAZORCAKE



Andy Garcia

1. World Burns To Death, *Here ■ Dream Dies Everyday* LP
2. Limp Wrist, *Facades* LP
3. Sanction A, live at La Vitrola, 6/16/17
4. Oliver Sheppard, *Destruction: Text I*
5. Silent Age, demo

Alicia Armijo

1. Deap Vally, *Femejism* LP
2. Queens Of The Stone Age, "The Way You Used to Do"
3. Operation Ivy, *Energy* LP
4. Royal Blood, Self-titled LP
5. Death From Above 1979, *The Physical World* LP

Aphid Peewit

- MDC / Antidons, *No Trump, No KKK* split 7"
- Lillingtons, *Project 313* 7"
- Meatmen / ANTISEEN, *Tribute with Two Heads* split 7"
- Poison Idea / Angry Snowmans, *Santa Claus Is Back...* split 7"
- Feederz, *What Would Hitler Do?* 7"

Art Ettinger

- ANTISEEN, *Obstinate* LP
- Various Artists, *I Hate My Fucking Band: A Japanese Tribute to M.O.T.O.* CD
- Limp Wrist, *Facades* LP
- MDC, *Mein Triumph* CD
- Dead On The Streets, Self-titled LP

■ ■ Pinkel

- Sheer Mag, *Need to Feel Your Love* LP
- Lost Balloons, *Hey Summer* LP
- Royal Headache and Marked Men, live at the Regent (Holy shit!)
- *Tranny* by Laura Jane Grace and Dan Ozzi (audio book read by Laura: highly recommended)
- *Punk 45 Chaos in the City of Angels and Devils: Punk in L.A. 1977-1981* compilation LP

Gandace Hansen

1. Universe Is Lit Black and Brown Punk Fest. Holy shit, I still can't get over how incredible it was.
- Squid Ink, Ugly, Dream Probe,

Wizard Apprentice, My Parade!

- Ugh, so good!
2. Getting a dog. Poptart is so cute and weird.
3. Worriers at Acerogami. New single "Future Me" ■■■ the soundtrack to my ■■■■■■
4. Inverts and Trap Girl (and Manny as special guest sub) at Bridgetown DIY!
5. Getting into moisturizing. Who knew feet could be ■■ soft?

Chris ■■■■■■

1. Exit Order, *Seed of Hysteria* LP
2. Flowers Of Evil, *City of Fear* LP
3. Pandemix, *Scale Models of Atrocities* LP
4. Waxahatchee, *Out in the Storm* LP
5. Mountain Goats, *Goths* LP

Chris Terry

1. Excessive Cruelty 12"
2. Both new Shabazz Palaces albums
3. See above
4. *The Invaders* by Karolina Waclawiak (novel)
5. Happy 100th, Razorcake!

Craven Rock

1. East Bay Area Development Arsonist(s) (GO! GO! GO!)
2. Autonomous Mutant Festival 21
3. *I Am Not Your Negro* (movie)
4. *Dispatches from Ferguson Vol. 1* (zine)
5. Chumbawamba, *Tubthumper* CD

Clara Luci Acosta

1. *Top 5 Things That Happened This Summer (In No Particular Order)*
- Became a Cal Poly Pomona Bronco
- Left the country for the first time in my life
- Quit my bullshit minimum wage job
- Got my driver's license
- Graduated from Vince Lombardi High School

Cynthia Pinedo

1. *5 Summer Highlights*
1. Volunteering at the Rock'n'roll Camp for Girls in Los Angeles and Orange County.
2. Worriers at Acerogami. All of their albums plus "Future Me" have been on heavy rotation this summer.

3. Two new SOAR singles came out in less than a month.
4. Marked Men and Royal Headache at The Regent.
5. Secret Drum Band and YAAWN on the rooftop of the LGBT Center in Santa Ana. Sounds ■■■■ ■■ dreamy, and so screamy.

Daryl Gussin

- The VLHS Class of 2017 Graduation Ceremony
- Mark Cone, *Now Showing* LP
- Impalers, *Cellar Dweller* LP
- Notches, *Change My Mind* 7"
- Shite, 100 issues?!?! Good job everyone!

Eric Baskauskas

1. Razorcake #100! Congratulations, everyone. Nice reminder that the human race is not 100% stupid and doomed!
2. But also, we might be. Prepare for the end with the Impalers' *Cellar Dweller*.
3. Or fight back ten seconds at ■ time with the Anal Trump discography.
4. It's also okay to wallow ■ bit with the Dopamines' *Tales of Interest*.
5. But why be sad when you ■■ listen to the Tarantila 7" six times every hour?

Gabby Gonzalez

1. *Top 5 Punk Bands of Today*
- No Approach
- Nervous Low
- Nuns
- Rik & The Pigs
- The Tissues

Garrett Barnwell

1. Hardware, *Burning in the Sun* LP
2. Concrete Criminals, *Coping Mechanism* 7"
3. The Cavemen, *Dog on ■ Chain* 7"
4. House Beer (craft Budweiser!)
5. Razorcake's 100th issue (Dude, you're old!)

Griffin Wynne

1. *Top Five while Driving Cross Country in ■ Week.*
1. White Sands National Monuments in New Mexico, (Huge, white sand dunes you can sled on.)
2. Dropping that I volunteer at Razorcake to flirt with the cashier at ■ thrift store in Marfa, Texas. (After driving four hours to see Prada Marfa.)

3. Finding old *Razorcakes* ■ Euclid Records in New Orleans. (Looking for an issue to send to cute cashier.)
4. Hearing the first single from Who Is She? (A newish project with members of Lisa Prank, Chastity Belt, and Tacocat)
5. Touring the City of Biloxi Center for Ceramics, ■ community ceramics studio in Mississippi.

Jimmy Alvarado

- Recording La Tuya's first "record" at Minor Chord Studios in Panorama City. The most music-related fun I've had in years ■■■■ of the best studios I've ever recorded in.
- F.C.D.N. Tormentor, *Dungeon Days 1982-85* LP: One of the Eastside underground's greats gets ■■■■ much-deserved respect, and we get some new recordings.
- Modern Warfare, *Complete Recordings and More* LP: Another great L.A. band gets some love.
- Isotope Soap, *Piñata Chaos* LP: Where synth-punk and hardcore meet in all the best ways.
- *Wonder Woman* movie: First movie I've seen multiple (five, to be exact) times at ■ movie theatre in decades... Don't judge me.

Kayla Greet

- Radioactivity, Bad Sports, VHS, Medicine Bows ■■ Lucky Liquor, Seattle, Wash.
- Negative Approach at Cattivo with Wet Brain, Chiller, Lansbury at Gooskis, Pittsburgh, Pa. Went to both shows with Art Ettinger!
- Guitar Wolf, Mommy Long Legs, Issac Rother And The Phantoms at Sunset Tavern, Seattle, Wash.
- Western Settings, Heartsounds, Four Lights, Phasers On Kill at Kraken, Seattle, Wash.
- Guest DJing on KEXP's punk radio show Sonic Reducer with Propagandhi, *Victory Lap*

Kevin Dunn

1. Girls Rock! Rochester
2. Cyanide Pills, *Sliced and Diced* LP
3. Needles/Pins, *Good Night, Tomorrow* LP
4. Pink Mink, Self-titled LP
5. Camp Cope, Self-titled LP

Kiyoshi Nakazawa

1. Japanese American Obon Festivals in L.A.
2. Rediscovering "Wormy" by D. A. Trampier
3. CH3, "Put 'Em Up"
4. Pu\$\$y-Cow, "Straight Edge Wedding"
5. Companies replying to job applications

VLHS Class

of 2017 Graduation

Kurt Morris

1. Converge and Neurosis at Royale in Boston, 8/6/17
2. Dasher, *Sodium*
3. Advocating for better mental health
4. Worriers at Great Scott in Boston, 7/9/17
5. Oxbow at ONCE Somerville, 7/14/17

Louis Jacinto

Top 5 Punk Flavored PST: LA/LA Art Shows

1. Nervously Engendered: The Art of Gerardo Velazquez, Coagula Curatorial
2. Axis Mundo: Queer Networks in Chicano L.A., MOCA Pacific Design Center
3. Xerografia: Copyart in Brazil, 1970-1990, UC San Diego
4. Radical Women: Latin American Art, 1960-1985, Hammer Museum
5. Chicano Male Unbonded, The Autry

MariNaomi

1. Nicole J. George's graphic memoir, *Fetch: How a Bad Dog Brought Me Home*. I was crying in the first ten pages.
2. *Not My Small Diary #19: Unexplained Events!!* DIY autobio comics at its best.
3. I found a copy of Nina Hagen's *Unbe* at a record store, and now my husband understands my obsession.
4. I can finally do a pull-up! Now if I'm ever hanging precariously off a cliff, I'll be able to save my own life.
5. I watched two cis-het white programmer dudes (who don't work in comics) work their butts off to get the new-and-improved Cartoonists of Color and Queer Cartoonists databases up and running, pro bono. Good people exist!

Mark Twistworthy

- Heritage Unit, *Enjoy Moving On*
- The Fall, *New Facts Emerge*
- Guided By Voices, *How Do You Spell Heaven*
- SXSW, *Is a Band*
- Devious Ones, everything

Marty Ploy

1. The VLHS Class of 2017 Graduation Ceremony, 7/8/17
2. Bad Cop / Bad Cop, *Warriors*
3. Decent Criminal, *Bloom*
4. Love Scum, *Hearts in the Gutter*
5. The Hammerbombs, *Hammerbombed*

Michael T. Fournier

- Rev. Nørb, *Fear of a Nørb Planet* (book)
- Pandemix, *Scale Models of Atrocities* LP
- Coastwest Unrest, *The Crazy Ones* LP
- Worriers, "Future Me" single and live at Great Scott, Allston, Mass. 7/9/17
- Needles/Pins, *Good Night, Tomorrow* LP

Milw Dumps

1. *Turn It Around: The Story of East Bay Punk* documentary
2. Crimpshrine, *Free Box*
3. Hidden Spots, *New Me/New You* LP
4. Nature Boys, *3rd* LP
5. The Missed, demo

Milw Faloan

Top 5 Highlights from Summer Trip to RZC HQ (Happy 100th, everyone!)

1. Taking public transportation to Chavez Ravine (Three hits for Puig!)
2. Meeting Mike Watt (Getting to co-pilot an interview too!)
3. Seeing the Worriers live (Second time this summer!)
4. Hearing how well The Bats and Yo La Tengo go together (One playlist that lasted half my flight across the country.)
5. Catching up with the most incredibly thoughtful, funny, supportive people anywhere (I'm off straws—swear to it!)

Milw Frame

- Cayetana, *New Kind of Normal* CD
- Sin Cave, Midgut, and Altered State, demos
- Def Leppard, *Hysteria* 30th anniversary CD
- Lee Harvey Oswald Band, *Blastronaut* LP
- Puke, Spit & Guts, *Eat Hot Lead* LP

DJ Naked Rob

- Radio Valencia, SF
1. Essex Muro, *Numb Life* CS (Raleigh, N.C. hardcore)
 2. Limp Wrist, *Facades* LP (SF Bay Area hardcore)
 3. Blaha, *Fresh Horse* EP (Minneapolis surf fuzz punk)
 4. Super Thief, *Stuck* CS (ATX noise rock)
 5. Flowers Of Evil, *City of Fear* LP (NYC hardcore/punk)

Nighthawk

- Boris The Sprinkler, live in Green Bay
- Boris The Sprinkler, live in Green Bay
- Boris The Sprinkler, live in Green Bay
- Boris The Sprinkler, live in Green Bay
- Boris The Sprinkler, live in Green Bay

Patrick Houdek

1. Nick Cave And The Bad Seeds at Auditorium Theatre, Chicago, Ill., June 16, 2017
2. Daikajiu at Liar's Club, Chicago, Ill., April 16, 2017
3. Murphy's Law, The Beer Nuts, Mystery Actions at Live Wire Lounge, Chicago, Ill., May 5, 2017
4. Pegboy and The Beer Nuts at Motoblot, Chicago, Ill. June 24, 2017
5. Canadian Rifle, Bad Taste, Apostles On Strike, and TV Slime at Liar's Club, Chicago, Ill. June 5, 2017

Paul Silver

1. VLHS Class of 2017 Graduation with Dead To Me, Toys That Kill, toyGuitar, Chillout, Horror Squad, Dudes Night, Tiltwheel, Caskitt,

- Tracy Soto, The Stupid Daikini, Jason Paul & The Know It Alls, Best Death, Marriage Material, Never Old Bones, Adder, and Bryant Ned
2. Pears, Great Cynics, Darko, On A Hiding To Nothing, Cereal Box Heroes, and Eat Dirt at New Cross Inn, London, U.K.
 3. Holiday, *California Steamin'* LP
 4. F.U.'s and The Bollweevils at The Underworld Camden, London, U.K.
 5. Sketchy, *Heck* LP

Rebecca Rodriguez

- Thievery Corporation, *The Temple of I & I*
- Sonny Rollins, *Sonny Rollins Vol 2*
- La Tuya masters mixed by Minor Chord Studios
- New finds (books) from second hand store
- Interviewing Jaime Hernandez for Razorcake Issue #99

Rene Navarro

1. Yo La Tengo live and free of charge in Marina del Rey
2. *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood (book)
3. Listening to Sad Tuesdays on KCHUNG
4. Recovering from a staph infection which gave me lots of time to reflect on life, write, spend time with people, and ultimately remind me of the darkness BJJ keeps at bay.
5. *The Wind That Shakes the Barley* directed by Ken Loach (movie)

Rev Nørb

- Baby Shakes, *Turn It Up* LP
- Dany Laj & The Looks, *Alive & Kicking* LP
- Drakulas, *VHS 12" EP*
- Choke Chains, Self-titled LP
- Various Artists, *I Hate My Fucking Band: A Japanese MOTO Tribute* CD

Rich Cocksedge

- Five Songs I'm Currently Enjoying
- Colour Me Wednesday, "Queer for the Summer"
 - Natters, "Surf Off!"
 - Remnants, "Set Up"
 - Newish Star, "Double Super Jackpot"
 - No More Lies, "Wrong Stage Bad Scenario"

Rosie Gonca

- Best Shows of Summer 2017
1. Shannon & The Clams at Burger Boogaloo in Oakland, Calif. 7/1/17
 2. Iggy Pop at Burger Boogaloo in Oakland, Calif. 7/1/17
 3. Radioactivity at Hemlock Tavern in SF, 6/7/17
 4. Marked Men at The Chapel in SF, 7/22/17
 5. Dead To Me at VLHS (final show) in Pomona, 7/8/17

Ryan Nichols

1. Contributing to Razorcake and being able to see us reach issue 100
2. Poptone at Anaheim House of Blues
3. *Lonely Boy* by Steve Jones (book)

4. Mark Lanegan, *Gargoyle* LP
5. Sextile, *Albeit Living* LP

Tal Lucci

1. Celebrating my fortieth birthday at my local skate park. Fifteen-year-old me never would have thought that could happen.
2. Super Thief, *Stuck* CD
3. Super Thief, live
4. The Cavemen, *Dog in a Chain 7"*
5. The Wead, "By the Whey" b/w "And I and She" 7"

Sean Arenas

- Midnight Reruns, *Spectator Sports* LP
- Magnum Force, *Discography* LP
- Gay Kiss, *Rounded Down 7"*
- Burnout, Self-titled 7"
- Lee Bains & The Glory Fires, *Youth Detention* CD

Sean Koepenick

Strange Boutique Songs (RIP Fred "Freak" Smith, Beefeater / Strange Boutique)

1. "Black Sun"
2. "De Milo"
3. "Quicksand Minds"
4. "In a Heaven"
5. "Glaciers Down/Keep Them Still"

Steve Adamyk

- Lost Balloons, *Hey Summer* LP
- Wyldlife, *On Your Block* LP
- The Rubs, *Impossible Dream* LP
- Sheer Mag, *Need to Feel Your Love* LP
- Gorilla, *It's All Pop 12"*

Theresa W.

1. Hawaiian hardcore
2. Dumb Luck, *The Neighbors* EP
3. Abolitionist, *The Pinnacle* EP
4. Square Of Opposition's anti-fascist limited run T-shirts
5. No! A Benefit Compilation

Toby Tober

- Top 5 Movies I Have Recently Enjoyed
1. Jerrod Carmichael: 8
 2. *Maudie*
 3. *My Life as a Zucchini*
 4. *Brockmire*
 5. *Sarah Silverman: A Speck of Dust*

Todd Taylor

- Marked Men and Royal Headache, live at the Regent
- Worriers live at the Bootleg
- Three-way tie: *Occupy Pynchon*, Sean Carswell (book), *Gun, Needle, Spoon*, Patrick O'Neil (book), *Fear of a Nørb Planet*, Rev. Nørb (book)
- Drakulas, *VHS 12" EP* tie with *Vanity Don't Be Shy* LP
- Radioactivity "Infected" b/w "Sleep" 7"

Ty Stranglehold

- Top 5 Band I Got into Directly Because of Razorcake
1. The Marked Men
 2. Neighborhood Brats
 3. Modern Action
 4. RVIVR
 5. Off With Their Heads



ABSOLUT: Demo 2013: EP

Y'all know how I feel about demos pressed to wax? It's usually a waste. Sometimes I'm proved wrong. Here, your honor, is case number one: Ear-bleeding feedback, six tracks of crazed d-beat noise like the bastard children of Shitlickers, Cimex, and Lebenden Toten. Out of Canada, they already split up. I. Love. This. Shit. —Tim Brooks (No address listed)

ACCIDENT: Platinum Summer: CS

Snotty, loud, and esoteric punk/hardcore from Western Massachusetts. Germs abrasiveness and Saccharine Trust weirdness with a Reagan Youth fuck-it-all attitude. My fists are all bloody from punching on the concrete. The label will put out your tape. No, seriously! Punks, freaks, and outsiders only, please. —Juan Espinosa (More Power Tapes, morepowertapes@gmail.com)

AK-47: Burn the Rats Out: CD

This band has been a part of the fabric of my local scene almost as long as I have lived here (going on a quarter century now). It always puts a smile on my face to know that AK is still angrier than all of us, and have no qualms about giving you an earful. While it is a reoccurring theme with the band, it feels like police violence and oppression are taking center stage here. From the front cover photo of riot cops on fire, to the opening song "When Pigs Fly," the message is clear. Fuck the police, fuck oppression, fuck cancer, and fuck you if you make excuses. This is as hardcore as it gets. Blasting riffs and beats to match the intensity in the vocals. Thirty-onesongs in forty-one minutes! Full disclosure, this is a small city and these guys are friends of mine, but I was reviewing their bands long before I knew them, and I would be remiss if I didn't take this opportunity to share one of the best political hardcore punk bands I have heard. —Ty Stranglehold (Self-released, ak47hardcore.blogspot.ca)

ANDY THE BAND: Carry On: 7" EP

Sometimes a band can be too good. Terrible Feelings was one those bands. Really proficient players, excellent songwriting and, yet, somehow they weren't as big as they should've been. I thought they'd be colossal; on a Swedish major at least. Who knows why it didn't happen, but Andy from Terrible Feelings/Satanic Surfers is his own now, and this here record is to be in support of his upcoming tour supporting Vanna Inget in Japan. The music's great. Not exactly far removed from Terrible Feelings, but not as "rock" as it's self-described. It's softer, but it still sounds like punk music in my ears. Looking forward to hearing more. Another fine releases from the always-consistent Sabotage Records. —Steve Adamyk (Sabotage, sabotagerecords.com)

ANTI-SEEN: Obstinate: LP

Obstinate is the first ANTI-SEEN full-length since the tragic death of



the band's cofounder, guitarist Joe Young. Mad Brother Ward does a terrific job of filling the shoes of Young by retaining Young's signature sound, while adding twists that all his own. To say that ANTI-SEEN bounced back from heartbreak is an understatement, as this album is as vital as any in their extensive catalog. The LP version is on TKO and the CD version is on Mystery School. The vinyl ends with a lock groove that repeats the title of the album over and over, a hilarious treat for those of us who can't get enough of one of the most unique voices in the history of punk. The packaging is fantastic, with a giant poster included with the beautiful marbled grey vinyl. The current band lineup puts on a mind-numbingly fierce live show, and these songs fit in well with the nearly thirty-five years of ANTI-SEEN's back catalog. Stunning from start to finish, *Obstinate* smashes any and all notions that bands can't sustain vivacity over extensive time periods. ANTI-SEEN isn't going anywhere anytime soon, and if this record is any indicator, they'll continue to write instant classics year after year. —Art Ettinger (TKO)

ANTHON PROJECT: Disgust: LP

Very competent grind/HC from Sweden that sounds good at both 33 and 45 but is appropriate at 45RPM (in case you're keeping score). The songs have a d-beat edge and remind me a lot of their Swedish counterparts End Of All, though they sweep aside the melodies of the stadium crust bands and focus more on tempo changes, blast beats, and those simple but effective "chugga chug" riffs. For fans of Cursed, Ed Gein, and Deathwish/

A389 catalogs. The songs are simple but effective, the recording is crisp, and the packaging is excellent. —Ian Wise (Power It Up, power-it-up.de)

ATERFALL / VANVETT: Split: 10"

Attention crust fans, here's a great split from two Swedish bands. Vanvett describe themselves as d-beat and "don't give a shit beat," this is pretty accurate for both bands. Grab some cheap beer, throw an arm around your closest, crustiest friend, and listen to this split. —Ryan Nichols (Phobia, order@phobiarecords.net)

AYE HUNK: Silver Haze: CD

It's really difficult to review an album with so many layers of intentional magic moving through each part of it. *Silver Haze* opens with an intro that feels like an art installation, mixing children's voices in conversation with ambient sounds, rhythm, and the echoes of awkward laughter. Those echoes of youth and unease, mixed with brilliant forward-propelling energy, set up the tone and intention of the songs that follow. They're brooding and blunt with verses that fall into choruses that fall into sparkling instrumentals and hard stops, making for imaginative soundscapes rather than basic knuckle dragging bullshit. It may take you a minute to digest. It also may not be for you. Imagine Sonic Youth raised a crew of queer babes who grew up and made them irrelevant. Imagine the hard boundaries between emo and punk and indie were burned down and replaced with porous, astrological space filled with potential and prisms that reflect and redirect on new planes. Highly recommend. —Candace Hansen (Don Giovanni)

BABY SHAKES: Turn It Up: LP

I have yet to hear a record by this male-drummed quartet that I have not adored, though putting the drummer's face on the enclosed poster really musses up my pursuit of the prurient interest, although in terms of resale value I suppose it's probably for the best. A presumably very floral smelling mass of checkers, stripes, and bangs, the Baby Shakes do a continually admirable job of grinding up and processing their influences (Bobbyteens? Nikki & The Corvettes with better guitar leads? Glam on a few songs?), without actually directly sounding like their influences. Everything kinda goes in one end, gets pulped into the maelstrom of Rock Slurry by the creative process, and out the other end is the Baby Shakes, which is great—punk-poppy rock'n'roll, equal parts glitz and blitz, gloss and boss, glands and band. As pleasant as I find the whole sweet morass, the one thing that they really haven't done—to my myopic eardrums, anyway—is to repeatedly create product possessed by some divine spark of band-defining originality; something that the Baby Shakes and the Baby Shakes alone could produce. I like pretty much everything they've done, but (and admittedly I'm picking nits here) nothing they've ever done has been dreadfully unique; it's a well-crafted synthesis of influences but not really a brand leader. Ah well, I'm sure their forthcoming double-album rock opera about a deaf, dumb, and incontinent kid who plays Candy Crush exceptionally well is already half in the can. That said, please enjoy the best bangs in rock'n'roll, won't you? BEST SONG: "Turn It Up." BEST SONG TITLE: "Baby Blue"... IF YOU'RE BADFINGER. FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Includes a cover of "Last Night" by the Scientists. —Rev. Nørð (Lil' Chewy)

BAD COP / BAD COP: Warriors: CD

After incessant touring, the member's battle with substance abuse, and a garbage human being elected president, Bad Cop has returned with eleven songs that are dagger sharp. There is so much concentrated power and vitriol on this record compared to their debut full length, *Not Sorry*. The first track "Retrograde" kicks off with laughter before Stacey Dee's gruff yet melodic voice screams through. Singing duties are largely left to Stacey on this record, but there are a few helmed and written by Jennie Cotterill and Lihn Le. Those tracks from the latter two ladies fit right in with the themes of not backing down, demanding equality, denouncing domestic violence, and highlighting issues of body dysmorphia. Bad Cop is not afraid of being angry and loud about it, all the while accompanied by powerful guitar riffs, breakneck speed, and heavy beats. "Amputations" slows things down quite a bit but might be my favorite track. It's an anthem for being a badass and pushing past the

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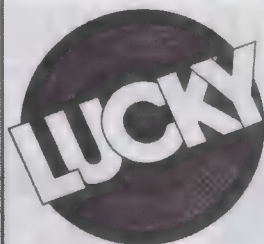
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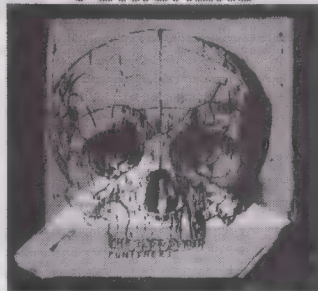
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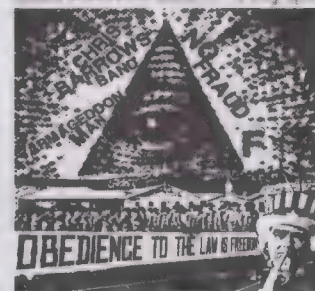
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bullshit parts of life. Plus it has this rad lyric coupling: "Run along, find some other prey / break a tooth on my thick skin." Some other major standouts on this record are "Wild Me," "I'm Done," and "Brain Is for Lovers," which all quickly became earworms. Everything about this record is stepped up a notch. It's one of the first collections of songs in this terrible administration that staunchly promotes feminist values with a message and voice that I absolutely prescribe to. This record is strong as hell—slightly over polished in parts, but that's just how you get a diamond. Well that and amassed pressure and heat, which this band clearly knows how to handle. —Kayla Greet (Fat)

BARBED WIRE BRACES: Self-titled: CD

Barbed Wire Braces makes gnarled street punk suitable for getting drunk in a gutter to. It's fast and growly stuff, for UK82 fans, similar to the Exploited. Nothing too groundbreaking here but an ably-made take on a classic style of punk. The individually screen-printed CD case is a nice touch. —Lyle (Self-released, barbedwirebraces.bandcamp.com).

THE AMERICAN: American: CD

I was fully prepared to hate this. With its glossy digipack cover featuring an American flag guitar, logo pulled directly from one of the free font websites, and the sticker proclaiming "Winner Indie Music Channel

Awards 2017: Best Alternative Band." You can imagine how surprised I was when I put the disc in and... Nope, I really fucking hate this. Super polished mid-to late-'90s style alterna-rock with vocals that remind me of the DJ at a seedy strip bar. The members of Big Mess cut their teeth in an early '80s L.A. punk band called Easter (that apparently, Mike Ness was in at some point) and, I shit you not, the fucking Doobie Brothers!? Most of the songs here are clocking in at three, four, and even five minutes long, with the shortest being a Ramones cover. I just don't have the attention span. In the end, I did like the riffs on a couple of songs, but those ones came off more like a less fun Gas Huffer, at best. —Ty Stranglehold (Lord Cash Pockets)

BLACK COMMUNION: Self-titled: CD

Not sure if Black Communion should be considered death metal with some toes in the crust punk puddle or vice versa, but both the name and lyrical content (graveyards and darkness) shove the scales in the direction of the former. The tunes are generally catchy in terms of the genre and, overall, it's a short burst of tuneage: a half dozen songs or so. A longer record might leave me getting bored, but this one stops before that happens. And now that I think about it, Black Communion remind me of a more gothic version of Unsane. Good stuff. —The Lord Kveldulfr (Trip Machine Laboratories)

KANGPUNK: Svin: EP

Out of control Kangpunk from Sweden. Straight out of the Totalitär/Wolfsack rule book. Killer. Eleven tracks. No solos. No bullshit. Pure d-Beat. Hail Sweden. —Tim Brooks (Phobia, phobiarecords.net)

BRAT-BATS: Double Feature: 7"

I remember a band called the Brain Bats from the Boston area in the late '90s, and from the artwork and song titles I figured this was a new release from that band. However, once this record plays, it is evident that this is a new band with a completely different sound. The vibe here is like Electric Frankenstein crossed with somebody off of the AmRep stable. Pretty solid noisy, spooky hardcore with harsh vocals and a record with cover art by artist XNO. —Mike Frame (Atomoguan, brain-bats.bandcamp.com)

BROMURE: La Roquette: 7"

Before Rixe were a band, and before Lion's Law took off, there was a mostly under-the-radar Parisian band called Maraboots that played with the styles of early French oi and punk in a way that was catchy and exciting. Members went on to form the aforementioned bands and a few others and have gone to receive considerable praise for their efforts. Maraboots always held a special place in my heart that was never quite filled by their later projects (as much as I enjoy them), and this is as close to that Maraboots

style which that group of people has come to in the last several years. The songs are catchy but not anthemic; they're cold without sounding sparse. The saxophone on the songs rounds out the sound in that distinctly French way (though many have tried, no one outside the originating country of the oi sax has ever really nailed it like they have). Highly recommended. —Ian Wise (UVPR, uvpr.fr)

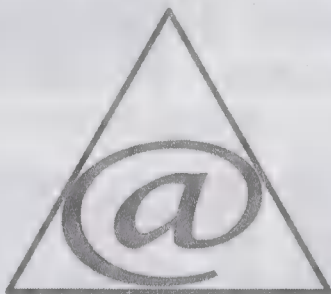
BRONXXX: Free Sample: CD

BronXXX is not The Bronx. This is a band of skate posse thrashers from Japan rather than a Southern Californian punk rock band that used to be called The Drips. I first heard these maniacs a couple of years ago, and a friend broke it down for me. "They are these Japanese dudes who love skating and punk rock but kind of suck at it but do it anyways because they love it. They're custom made for you!" He said that last part because I am part of a skate crew called Teem Shitty who have a similar philosophy. The tunes are a lot of fun, often reminding me of Calgary skate rock legends Sheglank'd Shoulders. I bet their shows are bananas! This CD is comprised of their half of a split LP with Vancouver's Tubuloids that came out on Beer City Records a while back. —Ty Stranglehold (Self-released, bronxxx.bandcamp.com)

HOOKY: EP: CD

Hooky punk from Anacortes, Wash. At a glance, it seems like

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your typical boys lamenting about suburban life six-song cassette, but this tape is surprisingly really good. Songs ■■■ short and sweet without getting boring. Hints of classic Southern California punk a-la The Descendents (lots of food references) and Circle Jerks, with ■ little 1980s Dischord style ringing through too. Best line: "I like to read my book!" —Candace Hansen (buffet.bandcamp.com)

BUMMERTOWN: No Going Home: 10" Seeing this in my pile of records for review ■■■ fortuitous but I was so glad to ■■ it ■■ I was just turned onto this band because of their recent U.S. tour. Bummertown offer a charming and unpretentious take on pop punk that I simply can't get enough of. Imagine ■ basement-dwelling pop punk band that was largely influenced by the early '90s K Records indie rock scene? I don't know if that makes any ■■■■ at all, as Bummertown are not really twee in any way like a lot of the K Records bands I ■■ thinking of, but the songs do have a sense of innocence that helps add to their appeal. These guitar-driven pop songs drop hooks galore, and if you're like me, you'll inevitably find yourself humming these melodies hours after listening, wondering, "What the fuck is this song I have stuck in my head?! Oh yeah, it's Bummertown." —Mark Twistworthy (bummertown@hotmail.com, bummertown.bandcamp.com)

BURDEN: Time Tryeth Truth: 7"

Vinyl pressing of the elusive Burden demo released last year. Burden has since evolved into ■ (beastly) full lineup, but in their infancy they were a ■■■-■■■ operation and this recording is from that stage in their development. The two songs (plus an intro) ■■ here are ■■ slightly-slower-than-mid-tempo oi. Original U.K. oi is certainly the inspiration here, but ■■ it goes, these songs have far ■■■■ in common with mid-to-late '90s American oi like the Templars/Adolf And The Piss Artists. The riffs leave ■ lot of open space for guitar flourishes, which is taken advantage of. The lyrics ■■ more generous than similar bands (in ■ good way), and everything here—from the packaging to the lyrics to the recording itself—points towards ■ very specific goal, which isn't common for ■ oi record. Andrew Fletcher, who wrote and recorded all the music here, is a visual artist who eschews typical hardcore/oi imagery with these disproportionate, monstrous people set in landscapes that sort of decay around the characters. The music here is a pretty accurate approximate of his art, which I appreciate. This is ■ solid outing if ■ slow burner, and ■ record that needs ■ few listens to take in. I ■■ this band live earlier this year and they ■■ destroying. —Ian Wise (Under Watchful Eyes)

BURNOUT: Self-titled: 7"

Why reinvent the wheel when you can light it ■■ fire and spin it really

fucking fast? Burnout, from Phoenix, Ariz., seems to rage by that ethos. The drum and guitar two-piece (Emmett Thatcher and Jirix-Mie Paz of Gay Kiss) lifts so much from Slap-A-Ham Records that the 7" sounds like unreleased Spazz. Is that ■ bad thing? Not if you like fastcore and powerviolence. Count ■■ in. —Sean Arenas (To Live A Live, tolivealie.com / Blast House)

CAMPORA: Mourning, Celebration: 10" EP

I was waiting for this ■■■ to come out. Even though this band features Jonah Matranga and J. Robbins, this EP is definitely not the meeting place of Far and Jawbox. I think I really like that about it. Recorded over some days in Baltimore, with guest spots from members of War On Women and the Pauses, this EP feels like it's about experimentation, venturing into a land of guitars without distortion and taking the risk of simplicity. It works really well some of the time—though ■ times, it might get a little too close to something you'd hear on the top 40. Surprisingly, it ■■ its best when it has a Sade quality: dark and super smooth. This feels like a record that was meant for this particular time; that is meant to be calming and incisive without being merely an escape. It's supposed to pull us through without letting us completely lose it. —Theresa W. (Arctic Rodeo, arcticrodeorecordings.com)

CAPITE: Greatest Hits Vol. 1: 7" EP

I know fuck-all about these ■■■■ but the available info I could find indicated they're an old band ■■■■ Albany, taking another stab ■■ troublemaking. Songs are short 'n' angry, but not too intense in delivery, and not too fast in tempo. It appears this ■■ their first recordings in twenty years. I'd be interested to hear where they're ■■ year or two from now, when they've got the dust really kicked off and a bit more grit in their attitude. —Jimmy Alvarado (Cacophone)

CAREER SUICIDE:

Maximum Response: CD

Thanks to the fanatical alt-right declaring war on America, there now exists ■■ ineluctable eventually: Demented Donny's Internment Camps for Dissidents. Which likely means I'm going to be calling Canada "home" soon. And that's fine by me; I'm hyperborean and Canada has great pike fishing and good beer. They also have a long history of punk bands that, with one power chord, can ignite ■■■■ of spontaneous human combustion under every "Make America Great Again" clown hat out there. Imagine that glorious fire of dumb blubber. Anyway, when I settle in to my ■■ Canadian digs, I'll want to know: has Career Suicide crept under the radar in their home country the way they seem to have in "great again" America? Is it possible that a band so gut-punchingly awesome is something of ■ red-headed step-sibling to Fucked

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Up—a Canuck band very much ■ radars in the lower forty-eight and, rightfully, a band very much adored? Less arty than modern day FU, Career Suicide has the anxious feel of a pier six brawl getting wildly out of hand. They do early '80s-flavored hardcore in a viciously unsentimental way that kicks your knee caps off before choking you with the panty hose of your own punk pretensions. I'm not ■■■ what that means, but I'm going with it. Fans of '80s hardcore bands like BGK and Articles Of Faith, as well ■ newer bands like Regulations and OFF!, take note. In this era of the Kali Yuga where Dumb is King and piss-simple tweety thoughts resonate, I'll say this: punk rock was made for times like this and Career Suicide is as good a soundtrack for anarchy as anything. Long live the Demented Child King! Death to Fanatics! Hail Eris! —Aphid Peewit (Deranged, derangedrecords.com)

CAT PARTY: *Next in Post: LP*

This is not your typical Hostage Records release. Nowhere to be found are the shredding odes to getting fucked up ■ the beach. Is it post-punk? It's post-punk. Cat Party ■ a post-punk band (I think). Intensely driving songs with shimmering guitar and ethereal vocals about loneliness and internal turmoil (I think). The more I listen to this, the more I hear the Hostage Records shining through. I think about ■■■ of the So-Cal hardcore bands that embraced

■ band like Joy Division as much as Black Flag, T.S.O.L., and Rikk Agnew's solo stuff come to mind instantly. Cat Party don't sound like those bands, but they have a distinct vibe, and I can't get enough. When I was a dumb punk kid (as opposed to an alleged punk adult?) I remember the joke was that we listened to The Cure, Bauhaus, and Joy Division ■ way to get with girls. The truth is, I ended up loving each of those bands, but I think I like Cat Party more than all of them. This has become one of my favorite Hostage Records releases, and I am a bit of a super fan. I cannot recommend this enough! —Ty Stranglehold (Hostage)

CAVEMEN, THE: *Dog on a Chain: 7"*

Press for this release states The Cavemen would have fit right in during the '90s garage punk boom, and that's on the money. Everything about this release—the black and white cover, the photos, the blown-out guitars, lyrical subject matter — ■ reminders of the best of the '90s rock'n'roll punk. Considering the label, (Slovenly) one shouldn't be surprised. All three songs shred but the back and forth male-female vocals on "Dog on a Chain" give that tune a slight edge. Slovenly puts out consistently top drawer slash-burn-pounding records. They're one of those labels where you ■ buy any release based ■ knowing the label and be guaranteed ■ good time. —Sal Lucci (Slovenly, slovenly.com)

CCCR: *Self-titled: CD*

The Dayglo Abortions go bar rock and then mate with Rancid. Loved it. —The Lord Kveldulfr (Mystery School)

CHANNEL 3: *Put 'Em Up: LP*

I first heard Channel 3 courtesy of the *I've Got a Gun* release on the No Future label in 1982, and it was a damn fine record. However, it ■ never ■ band which caught my attention with future releases, so I was curious to hear its first album in fifteen years and discover what my take would be now. *Put 'Em Up* delivers ■ punchy opener in the form of "Model Citizens" and all seems positive, but the album takes a downwards path heading into mid-tempo, bland rock territory with "Water & Time," which has nothing more than ■ mildly catchy chorus. Beyond there, it's only "The God That You Deserve" that catches my interest and it got to the stage where my notes even included "W.T.F.?" when listening to the awful "Blue Skies," a truly dire track. I'm afraid that this is not the album to start me waxing lyrical about Channel 3. —Rich Cocksedge (TKO, tkorecords.blogspot.com)

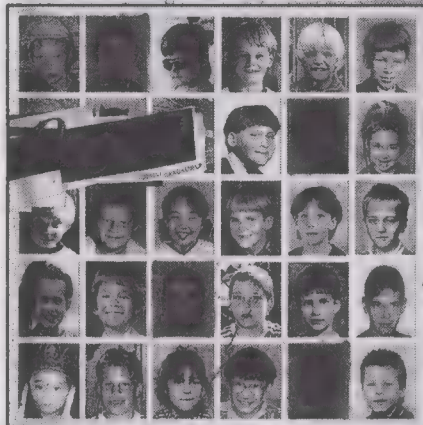
CHOKE THE POPE:

Emotional Material: CS

For ■ band as melodic and sweet as this, don't let it fool you. Lyrically, they ■ scathing and I think it's more of anger, frustration, and anxiety that rounds out the "emotional" part of their record title. There are ■ lot of

comparisons with them musically to the Lookout! scene in the early- to mid-'90s. Personally, I think they sound ■■■ like Pansy Division than any other band of that ilk at that time. Especially in their song "Jealousy," with lines like: "I wanna be ■ big strong man to impress my girlfriend but I'm just ■ stupid little bitch / I feel so insecure and that makes me feel so dumb." But where this band is really bringing the East Bay to the Northwest is in their subject matter. Songs circle around the current tech boom in Seattle, comparing it to the Silicon Valley (they even have ■ track called "Seattle, CA"), and really taking a highlighter to the economic displacement that's happening in the Emerald City. Many of the songs talk about gentrification, the displacement of the middle class and the struggle to find work, even when they have ■ degree ("Someone Pay My Student Loans") or settle for functioning lemons when it comes to vehicles ("My Car"). The latter has this excellent pairing of lyrics: "Fuck your Civic, yeah, fuck your Camry / My car ■ made the same year as me." Choke The Pope's vocal styling is saccharine with drawn out melodies and a slight nasally quality to them. Something about the pacing of their song "I'm Perverted" draws comparisons to Hole's "Celebrity Skin." Sonically, they're kind of your average pop punk band, but I'd say that the agenda they bring with them heightens Choke The Pope to ■ new level. —Kayla Greet (Den Tapes, dentapes@gmail.com)

BETWEEN THE DAYS RECORDS



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CLOAK DAGGER:
I Want Everything: LP

Cloak Dagger are ■ long-running Virginia band who've been blending pounding garage rock into old school hardcore since the mid '00s. This is their first album since 2009, and it finds the band sounding ■■■■ raw and scrappy than they did in the past. They've settled into ■ muscular groove, which suits them well. I wish they'd switch up the tempo a bit, but ultimately, this is a ripper. Throw it on if you miss stylish Jade Tree punk, or like a little Hot Snakes with your Swiz. —Chris Terry (wearecloakdagger.bandcamp.com)

COASTWEST UNREST:
The Crazy Ones: CD

You know how it is: you make friends with a band and you root for them. You want them to do well. In my case, Coastwest Unrest pulled into Orono, Maine in spring 2010, on this ridiculous tour from their hometown in Las Vegas. They played ■ bill with my first band (at age thirty-six!). We've kept in touch, and have traded shows on both coasts. In the years since, the band's releases have had moments but never reached the same heights or cohesion ■ *Old Weird America*, their 2010 sophomore LP. I'm psyched to say *The Crazy Ones* is their best release since then. Brothers Noah and Josh Dickie have always been the core of the band—in recent years, they've been playing as

■ duo. Noah's ■ great guitar player, balancing acoustic punk and deep-fried Americana, and Josh is ■ beast behind the kit. The songs ■ this record benefit greatly from ■ backing band, which add accent and stomp to the brothers' songs. "EPA (Edward Paul Abbey)" and "The Crazy Ones" jump right out of this ■■■■ as representative of the group's best—rocking and full. The rest of the album hangs together well and bears repeated listens. I haven't taken it out of my CD player in ■ month; the soundtrack to short drives and road trips. —Michael T. Fournier (Reclaim, reclaimrecords.com)

COLD KIDS: Das Wollen Wir: 7"

This is a second pressing and I'm fortunate to have picked this up, ■ I slept through its existence first time around. Garage punk aided and abetted by some killer synthesizer tuneage makes for a highly infectious result here. It might only be three songs but they are pure gems, keeping ■■ rocking and reeling with their edginess. Lyrics are in German but the title of the lead track is in French. With my limited knowledge of that language, I ■■ able to translate "Tout Avec Raison" literally to "All with Reason." It's ■ killer track with a wonderful intro and I can at least manage to sing along to three words of the chorus, too! —Rich Cocksedge (Pifia, pifia.records@gmail.com, pifiarecords.bandcamp.com)

CONCRETE CRIMINALS:
Coping Mechanism: 7"

I had a strange feeling when I saw this in the review bin that it just might rip, with its cover of ■ dude cracking a styling frontside grind in a pool and all. My gut was correct; this thing blazes in all the right ways. Five tracks of old school skate punk with some pretty thoughtful lyrics, including the skate-inspired ones. Holy shit, ■■ they playing on the deck at Kona on the back cover? —Garrett Barnwell (Not Like You, notlikeyourecords.com)

CONTROL FREAKS:
Mindless Entertainment: LP

This phenomenal debut LP from San Francisco's Control Freaks is one of the catchier albums of 2017. Slightly distorted dual male/female vocals blend perfectly, and the production is ideal for the twelve garage pop gems included. Featuring Natalie Sweet, lead singer of The Shanghais, and Greg Lowery from Supercharger, The Rip Offs, Infections, and Zodiac Killers, this four-piece is the sort of band that almost anyone with ■■■■ of fun will obsess over. Control Freaks will control your turntable for days on end once you give this glorious slab of vinyl a whirl. —Art Ettinger (Slovenly, slovenly.com)

CONVERGE: 'I Can Tell You about Pain' b/w "Eve": 7"

It's been five years since Converge's last full length, 2012's seminal *All We Love We Leave Behind*. As a band

whose ethos has always been about continued forward progression, the two tracks on this record ■■ as much ■ move forward as they are ■ look back ■ a band with over two decades of history behind them. The A side track, "I Can Tell You about Pain," is ■ short, punchy track, with all the blistering aggression I've come to expect from Converge over the years. The B side track, "Eve," is longer, darker, and more ethereal, including ominously sung vocals, and an epic buildup. Where *All We Love We Leave Behind* saw Converge reaching new levels of artistic greatness, this 7" teaser for their forthcoming album promises to take the band to even greater heights. —Paul J. Comeau (Deathwish, info@convergecult.com)

CROM:
The Cocaine Wars 1974-1989: CS

Los Angeles's Crom has been kicking around for decades now in several incarnations. The earlier years ■■■■ them as a sherned-out Anal Cunt drinking Steel Reserve for sustenance with blissful ignorance to the words "song" and "structure." Singles, splits, and compilations were released left and right and then for quite some time: nothing. That is until the year 2001 when their creative dam blew its wad and out gushed *The Cocaine Wars*: a full length of monolithic proportions which I ■■ only describe as the result of group sex between the genres of metal, doom, thrash, and powerviolence. This masterpiece

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of **the** album originally released in 2001 on Pessimiser and pressed only on the now deader than dead CD format. *Cocaine Wars* was the band's figurative debutante ball where they emerged **a** beautiful, sophisticated "artists" displaying their newfound maturity **in** writing memorable riffs, discernable lyrics, and stringing the album together with **a** smorgasbord of Easter eggs and samples from Conan films all while donning Slayer, Iron Maiden, Van Halen, Black Sabbath, and even Doobie Brothers T-shirts and patches because their hessian, metal, and classic rock roots will always show. A total of thirty songs and "sorta" songs that spread their cheeks **in** the underground music world and anyone else who takes themselves seriously. I do realize that the cassette, too, is a dead format but just listen to this and tell me if you'd rather party with someone blaring these tunes from a rusted old Cadillac's tape deck or from a cell phone synched to a Prius. Take **a** bow, Crom. —Juan Espinosa (To Live A Lie / Snow Goat)

CROOKED BANGS: **II**: LP

Heavy, shadowy, possessed-sounding post-punk; you just gotta look **at** the **album** to know exactly what you're getting into. It's deep red and black and seemingly stolen from some kind of forgotten ritual—the cover photo, that is, but if you **can** imagine the aural equivalent **to** that description, that's what this record sounds like. I know it seems **like** "dark post-punk" could

describe half the DIY bands starting in hip urban centers these days, but this has something **more** to it, something almost industrial in its forcefulness. There's **a** sort of seething, brooding, melodic power in this. Also, **a** lot of the lyrics are in French. This is the coolest fucking thing I've heard in **a** while. —Indiana Laub (Nervous Intent, nervousintent.com)

CULT OF THE PSYCHIC FETUS:

The Morgue: **7"** EP

Gothic psychobilly along the lines of, say, Deadbolt is the order of the day here. They keep the creep-factor high and the music's complexity bare-bones, which makes these songs about vampires and folks rising from the dead go a long way. Good stuff. —Jimmy Alvarado (Killjoy)

DAME: Self-titled: **7"** EP

Dame's sophomore offering, after 2015's *Charm School*, is a peek **at** what makes the Boston-based quintet exciting to watch. Here are three super dynamic songs which capture the band's ability to make dark, pop-inspired anthems that manage to cut through the baggage of '50s-inspired rockabilly and, instead, end up where you'd always wanted riot grrrl to end up. It's **a** tight, ethereal eleven minutes that brings the horror punk qualities of the Misfits or Murder City Devils without any of the cartoonishness. It is mixed perfectly to give you **a** super clean path into **a** darker realm. —Theresa W. (Charm School)

DANBERT NOBACON & THE **XXII** OF

INTENT: *Stardust to Darwinstuff*: **CD**
The leader of this band was in Chumbawamba. This is more folk oriented. Think the singer of Flogging Molly with more banjos. It is well played and there are many musicians contributing to each song. "Dark Matter" and "Brain Plasticity" snuck out from the pack. Ever wonder what Christmas will be like forty-five years in the future? Get this record and find out. —Sean Koeppenick (Verbal Burlesque, danbertnobacon@yahoo.com)

DANCER: "I'm Not Giving Up" b/w "Teenage Punk": **7"**

One of the nuances of early glam is to go big. Dancer is a recent band hitting good water marks on the good parts of a sliver of **a** scene that spawned **many** great songs and some terrible trends. "I'm Not Giving Up" is **a** mid-tempo glam nodder that would be at home among the songs at Bingenheimer's disco. It has the laid-back pace of a thoughtful T. Rex or Thin Lizzy track. "Teenage Punk" is more of the same with a little speed thrown in. Fans of early glam or Italy's Giuda should take note. Great single. —Billups Allen (Dig, digrecords.com)

DASHER: *Sodium*: **CD/LP**

It seems a bit odd to have **a** label like Jagiaguwar (known for such acts **as** Bon Iver) to put out **a** dark, heavy punk album, but here it is. And it's good! Fronted by drummer/vocalist

Kylee Kimbrough, her vocals match the rhythm of every pounding drum and crashing cymbal. The album is loud, with grooving, fuzzy guitar **and** thundering bass. (It's nice to be able to hear the bass for once in a band and have it used in a way that is important in the music.) Over the course of these eleven songs and thirty-two minutes, I hear early grunge—other times the groove of gloomy British acts such as Joy Division—but mostly it's Amphetamine Reptile bands from the 1990s. Kimbrough's vocals alternate between forceful utterances and full-throated hardcore screams, giving Dasher **a** range of sound that is absolutely crushing. Given the label, *Sodium* is a surprising, but welcome album. —Kurt Morris (Jagiaguwar)

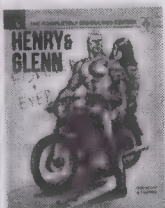
DAYTIME DRUGS:

Waitin' for the UFO: **CD**

This album's garage sound is so raw that it sounds like it was recorded on someone's iPhone. The title track features lead vocalist Hot Dog Haines wailing "waitin' for the UFO" over and over again, like **a** drunk dad at karaoke who also has access to a keyboard. Dear aliens, these **guys** are waiting for you to come take them away. —Cynthia Pinedo (Eatme Prawn)

DEAD 77: *Die Young*: **7"**

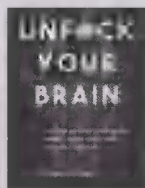
This new L.A. streetpunk quartet has a lot going for it. Four well-composed tracks showcase **a** embracing of stripped-down 1980s hardcore, with a major influence from the



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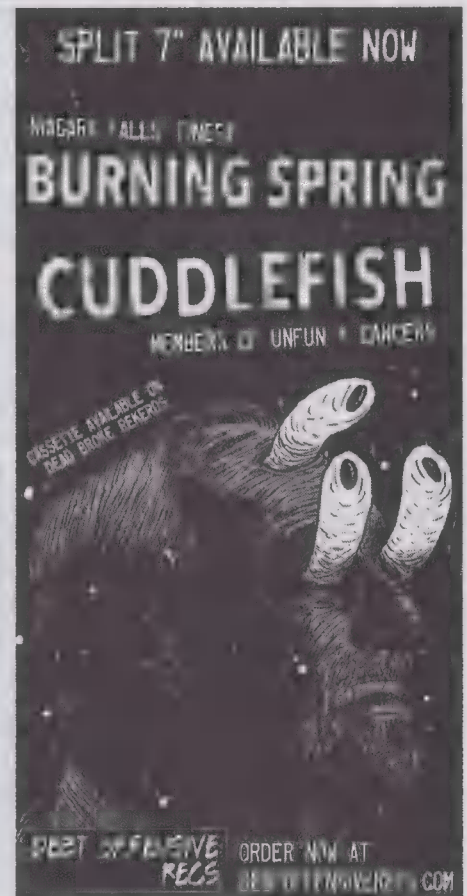


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1990s streetpunk resurgence. It's somewhat remarkable that a sound this seemingly derivative can still produce new, beguiling riffs, but the members of Dead 77 industriously play as if they're the first to discover this well-worn style. For **us**, that's an endorsement. The vocals are especially grabbing. This reviewer wishes a long life for Dead 77. —Art Ettinger (Evacuate, evacuaterecords.com)

DEBT NEGLECTOR: **Florida** strikes again and this time it's with Alex Goldfarb, formerly of Gatorface, No Friends, and New Mexican Disaster Squad, fronting Debt Collector. Leading off with the title track featuring **intro** that renders me agape with its simple yet hugely catchy quality, I get myself full of hope for thirty minutes of enjoyment. Goldfarb's vocals sound **bit** like Cliff Hanger of The Freeze and with a punchy, fuzzy accompaniment, boosted by big and bright guitars, this hits the nail firmly **the** head from start to finish. A much repeated half an hour of musical excellence. —Rich Cocksedge (Smartpunk)

DOMESTICS, THE: **Cherry Blossom** **I'm** partial to an almighty racket, but the latest release from The Domestics has actually gone beyond my personal preferences into **a** world where music is high on unlistenable. I don't want to be uncharitable, but this hurt my head

and not in a good way. I was just about coping during the first song and then the cymbals crossed the line—they sounded so high-pitched that it was all I could do to keep focussed on anything else and that didn't change during the remainder of the album. A rare miss from the usually reliable TNS label. —Rich Cocksedge (TNS)

DRAKULAS: VHS: 12" EP I love the Drakulas. You love the Drakulas. If you don't already love the Drakulas, stop reading, insert a bookmark here, dash down to the record store, and come back once you have decided to love the Drakulas. Seriously, we need certain ground rules here, and chief among them is that **EVERYONE MUST LOVE THE DRAKULAS**. What's not to love? You get fresh slabs of that taut Texan surgical punk that has been lacerating the world's foreheads for the last twenty years or so, coupled with a freshly ancient viewpoint of metropolitan fantasy degeneracy; fuck you, it's what's for dinner. Now that you love the Drakulas (or have stopped reading, possibly to take **opioids** and march into the **to** your overdue doom), let **discuss** the exact artifact up for review. Whilst the conceptualist in me would have loved to see a "VHS"/"Betamax" 45 (both being songs off the spectacular *Raw Wave* album, which you either love by now or left behind unopened as you marched into the sea earlier in this paragraph), I must admit that "VHS"


+ three non-LP tunes was likely **a** more productive way to go. All three of the new tunes—"Masculine Odor," "Inside Honey" and "D.R.A.X."—are **good** **anything** but the very best *Raw Wave* tracks, and the platter's silent underside features **a** silkscreen of the band's logo, and how can you not own **a** record where one whole side of it is your new favorite band's logo? You're not pulling your weight, dick. Limited to 350 copies to **obedience**. **BEST SONG AND SONG TITLE:** "Masculine Odor." **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** The Drakulas logo kind of looks like the logo of that band Dirty Looks who were **Stiff** around 1980, but more droplet-o-centric. —Rev. Nørb (Stiff Hombre, stiffhombre.bandcamp.com)

DREAM PROBE: Demo Full of rage, smarts, and tasteful riffage, Champaign, Ill. trio Dream Probe are holding it down for fast hardcore in a suburb known for sweaty emo boys. I love that Dream Probe's songs **heavy** and short. Vocalist Olguie sings totally in Spanish about political and personal subjects—such as Puerto Rican colonization and queer experience—and **a** lyric sheet is included. The tape flows together well and the songs are interesting and frenetic rather than static or formulaic. For fans of Poison Idea or Die Kreuzen or the current Get Better Records catalog. —Candace Hansen (Prescience Tapes)

2017: A rush of straight-up Boston hardcore with poignant lyrics in español. Negative FX and Jerry's Kids style wallowing with the production values that go perfectly with **a** black and white j card insert and zero lyrics or information. As of late, there's been some long-needed female/femme-fronted presence in the sausage fest that is the hardcore scene, with bands like Firewalker, Exit Order, Krimewatch, and now also Dream Probe leading the charge. Watch out macho-insecure, cis-hetero defensive dorks. A strictly boy's club this will **no** longer fucking be. —Juan Espinosa (Prescience Tapes, dreamprobe.bandcamp.com, prescience.bandcamp.com)

Live This is from 1987, which isn't my favorite **of** DRI, but I actually like this record. The recording is kind of rough-around-the edges and is mostly tracks from the first two LPs, so it still feels pretty punk. Honestly, that's really all there is to say about this since I'm guessing if you're a fan you just needed to hear that it wasn't a bad recording. —Ian Wise (Beer City, beercity.com)

Drip Feed: Fuckin' Dagger: 7" Not to be confused with the U.K. band of the **name**, Stockholm, Sweden's Drip Feed play pissed-off punk rock with **a** political leaning. I really dug the themes they tackled




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lyrically, particularly on the track "Dagger," from which the 7" takes its name. It speaks to the power that music has over each of us, and the force with which it impacts us. These praises aside, I felt that Drip Feed sounded a bit bland. The A side tracks "Digital Era" and "Dagger." Each had interesting riffs, including a part where the guitars drop away and it's just drums and bass—something that I love when bands do right. But the B side tracks didn't do much to set themselves apart musically from the A side. I think if Drip Feed added a second guitar, or at least recorded leads over their main riffs in some parts on record, I'd have been more stoked on this. As a single with "Digital Era" b/w "Dagger," I'd probably have been more into this, but as an EP it's a bit monotonous. —Paul J. Comeau (Elände, no address listed)

DROWNING ROOM: Catharsis: CD

I guess Drowning Room could be described as crusty anarcho punk hunkering up to the edge of sludge metal, kind of like lava that has cooled into big, lumbering chunks, but still runs fast and is hot as fuck. Listening to these four tunes made me feel like I had been beaten to a pulp by a giant troll with a land-shattering mallet, doused in venom and sulfur, and then beaten by the troll twice more for good while gremlins scrubbed my wounds with cinders. Well worth my time. —The Lord Kveldulfr (Trip Machine Laboratories)

E.D.S.: Demo: CS

E.D.S. makes twisted, too-fast hardcore in the American tradition of Blood Pressure and Government Warning. This five-track demo spins out just under nine minutes, but E.D.S. makes every second count, something I always appreciate in a hardcore band. I'm interested to hear more from these New Jersey freaks. —Lyle (Self-released)

EJECTOR SEATS, THE:

Everybody Calm Down: LP

Lo-fi, garagey, punk rock'n'roll. Fans of the Spits and Rip Off Records could dig on this. This record is kind of a mess, and I mean that in the best way possible! I imagine these guys are pretty wild on stage if this chaotic but alluring recording is any indicator. —Chad Williams (Collision Course, collisioncourserecords.com)

EJECTOR SEATS, THE:

Everybody Calm Down: LP

You know you've been reviewing records for a while when you receive your fourth Ejector Seats record to check out. Playing fast, noisy pop with a garage bent, Ejector Seats are anything but stagnant. This LP is fabulously bizarre, yet still somehow accessible. One of the band's many fortes is defying convention without being obnoxious about it. The LP is on hot pink marble vinyl and comes in a printed lyric sheet, of course, because Ejector Seats always have to have amazing packaging. Ever

evolving, The Ejector Seats get weirder and weirder. I'm digging it! —Art Ettinger (Collision Course, collisioncourserecords.com)

ELECTRIC STREET QUEENS:

Queen Sized: LP

Any femme-fronted band that simultaneously thanks Satan and a security team for success has my attention. *Queen Sized* boasts Runaways vibes, embodying style and levity in nine songs that range from silly to sexy, like a possessed leather cat suit. This album rips all the way through, from its opener "Hot Pants from Hell" all the way to the closer "Cheap Thrills," which energetically builds up into vocalist Coco shouting out thank yous like a rock'n'roll singer thrust on stage at a hardcore show, recognizing studio engineers, listeners, and commuters. Electric Street Queens aren't trying to change the world, they're just trying to wear some sweet hot pants, play rock'n'roll, and have a good time calling out scumbags and vibing with the dark lord—and I'm into it! —Candace Hansen (Little Queenie)

EMPTY HEADS: Normality: CS

This quick, dark, fuzzed-out four-song cassette from Calgary's Empty Heads made me smile at how much I relate to the generally distended sense of being. Songs like "Peeled Back" feature lyrics like "My body hates me," drawn out over something that is both melodious and dissonant. It

feels just about right. From members of Vancouver's Unfun, this cassette is completely in line with the other releases, reaching back to 2014's *Teerjarker*. On this release, they've refined their combination of pop sensibility with the kind of raucous playing that makes me believe them when they say, "I'm not normal." And they're not, but this is also still super accessible and intensely listenable. Into it. —Theresa W. (Debt Offensive, debtoffensive.bigcartel.com)

EVIL TWIN, THEE:

Back in the Alley: 7"

This record took me by surprise. I wasn't expecting these Australians to sound like they jumped right out of that killer punk rock'n'roll scene that was happening in the late '90s-early '00s on labels like Junk and Pelado Records. Tight, catchy garage punk songs with tough guitars. I wonder if there is a whole scene of this stuff happening down there right now, or if Thee Evil Twin are just killing it out there on their own. Either way, I can't wait to hear more! —Ty Stranglehold (Evil Tone, theeevilton.bandcamp.com)

EXCESSIVE CRUELTY:

Self-titled: 12" EP

Six songs of precision hardcore punk from ex-members of Strung Up. The energy's relentless, the playing's stop-on-a-dime tight, and the songs have cool tempo changes. High quality shit. —Chris Terry (Sorry State)

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F.C.D.N. TORMENTOR:

Dungeon Days LP + CD

Sometime in 1984 I attended a garage party in a condo behind Cal State L.A.'s campus. What was odd was the crowd—long-haired "metal" kids wearing Discharge shirts. Still, I braced for serious Maiden worship from the band, Tormentor, and, right as rain, the first tune's intro had all the "metal" ear markings one had come to expect. After a minute or so of that, however, the tune devolved into this ROOOOOOAAAAARRRRRR of chaos and blinding speed, flying fingers, flailing arms, and guttural howls. Subsequent songs followed the same pattern, played at velocities that would make D.R.I. piss their pants. It was insane. When drummer Ralo later moved on to hyper-thrash pioneers No Comment, Tormentor's wild tempos finally made sense, but at the time one played that goddamned fast, especially a bunch of metal kids. Despite markedly influencing many of their peers, they remained in the underground until they finally disbanded in the '90s. Collected here are recent recordings of vintage tunes from their oeuvre, performed by the band's members. The tempos dialed down a bit from their glory days, which means they're working at early D.R.I. tempos when they get a good head of steam going. The deluge of bands that have followed in their wake may temper much of what made them so singular, but it's clear here they remain a

fuckin' behemoth of a band and still one of the best at this genre. Add some kickass packaging and a bonus CD of additional tuneage and you have yourself a party, kids. Dunno if this is a one-off, but, if you're a fan of the genre, this is prime-pickin' here. Much love to these local pioneers, who are long overdue some props. —Jimmy Alvarado (F.O.A.D., foadrecords.it)

FACE TO FACE: "Say What You Want" b/w "I, Me, Mine": 7"

Perfectly fine single from Face To Face's album, *Protection*, with a non-LP B-side. Catchy and crisp, anthemic. Fans will be plussed, non-fans continue on with their lives. —Matt Werts (Fat Wreck Chords, fatwreck.com)

FASTPLANTS, THE: Spread the Stoke: LP

The Beer City website describes The Fastplants as skate punk, but this is a band applying a strong Motörhead-influenced rock'n'roll vibe to its music rather than the more punk/metal-based shredding sound I associate with skating. This doesn't blow me away but is solid enough to make me want to listen to every now and again. I've since listened to the band's contribution to a split LP with Daniel Wax Off and it's in the same ballpark as *Spread the Stoke*. It's similarly something I'll turn to on occasion. —Rich Cocksedge (Beer City, beercity.com)

FLIP OUT: "Kick You in the Face": 7"

Aggressive lo-fi thrash punk from Japan with a "kick you in the face" singer along with hardcore gang vocals. On the B side, it devolves into the ambient noise and energy of sick basement party I can only dream about. With progressive rock'n'roll licks dumped in between squealing metal solos and heavy breakdowns, this quick listen is fast and furious with no regard for altered time signatures. For being recorded in "OUR HOUSE," I'm impressed with the relatively decipherable production value. —Sal Go (625thrash.com)

FRENZAL RHOMB: Hi-Vis High Ten: CD

Even though they have been on one of my favorite labels for a while, I have never really stopped to check them out. Shame on me! Even though some may be put off by the choice of first single, with twenty songs you owe it to yourself to dig deeper. "I'm Shelving Stacks (While I'm Stacking Shelves)" certainly would be interesting water cooler talk. "Beer and a Shot" and "Pigworm" are some highlights on this record. Fast-paced riffage with lyrics that may cause you to do a double take. But stick with it and you will be rewarded. —Sean Koepenick (Fat Wreck)

FRENZAL RHOMB: Hi-Vis High Ten: CD

I suppose if you're into these guys you'll dig this record, but despite

their twenty-five year run, this is the first I've heard them. I have no baseline of the band's efforts by which to judge this offering. All I can say is that it sounded like an Australian NOFX, both musically and in terms of lyrical themes. For good or ill, then, that's how this record struck me, and I liked it, even though twenty songs got to be a bit tedious. —The Lord Kveldulfr (Fat)

FRIED EGG: Duck and Forth: 7"

Convincing and pretty relentless old school USHC from Virginia. The songs are slightly faster than mid-tempo and the riffs are good, but this is certainly of the "no frills" style of punk/HC, save for a cool, dark riff and surprising lead break on the closer, "Side By Side." Very solid record. —Ian Wise (Beach Impediment)

GAY KISS: Rounded Down: 7"

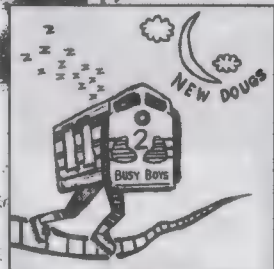
Arizona's Gay Kiss called it quits at the record release show for *Rounded Down*. It's a shame, but, fortunately, these four songs capture the band's stampeding energy. Right out of the gate, "Conceit" sets the tone and prepares the listener for more relentlessly savage hardcore, with a dollop of noise. Alongside Chest Pain, Nasa Space Universe, and Impalers, Gay Kiss should be lauded for crafting hardcore that spits in the face of boring, and about eight minutes, *Rounded Down* left me gobsmacked for the entire duration. Pick this one up

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New Dougs: Busy Boys

BUSY BOYS is the second release from CHICAGO wave / punk duo NEW DOUGS centered around singer Michelle Diamond and guitarist Jason Wacławik (ex Sig Transit Gloria, Brockmeyers). BUSY BOYS features several collaborations with other longstanding CHICAGO musicians and results in another set of catchy well crafted pop tunes.



Barren Couples: RT

Long time friend of label Scott Thomson (ex - CHICAGO THRASH ENSEMBLE, IRON REMINDERS, LITTLEMAN COMPLEX, LETTERBOMBS, and WAYOUTS) is back with more music...this time in the form of a solo noise project. BARREN COUPLES debut is a 4 song collision of sounds that we like to describe as AMBIENT CHILL NOISE...possibly the appropriate soundtrack for sitting alone in a dark basement while ignoring your family. Too harsh?

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before it disappears. —Sean Arenas (Sorry State, sorrystaterecords.com / Blast House)

GHOST WOLVES, THE: **Texas Platinum: CD**

All this intro track did was make me feel shame for how terrible my Japanese is and how badly I wish I could understand what they were saying. This is a duo from Austin who are doing a kind of reverse White Stripes thing—a guy on drums and a gal on guitar with a ton of style. Both musicians take on vocal duties, though the woman in the band definitely takes lead on most of the songs. Her voice wavers between an adolescent Betty Boop sound, and a crisp, strong snarl. Her guitar work is equal parts fuzzed-out distortion and twangy bluegrass. It's as if they could appeal to fans of Melvins, Nikki And The Corvettes, and The Cramps all at the same time. I really enjoy the second track on this record, "Strychnine in My Lemonade." Right away, this two piece demands my attention with super dancey drumming, powerhouse guitar riffs, and undulating melodic vocals. Then there's this mess of seemingly random audio clips of people talking that proves to be emblematic of the band. In the song "Noisy Neighbors / Yuppie Scum" the music actually stops and a distant voice is yelling the band to take it down a notch. There's also just a track of dogs barking / howling. All of it together

manages to make a gritty rock record that's also a little haunting. I imagine it'd be great to play in the fall when the leaves are just starting to change colors. —Kayla Greet (Hound Gawd!)

GLORIA BALSAM: Fluffy: 7"

Originally released 1979, this is a "dead stock" reissue (original vinyl pressings with reproduced cover) of an old Dr. Demento Show staple. In Demento fashion, the tune is an oddball paen to a lost dog, sung off-key with sentimental strings and backed by assorted personnel from Psycotic Pineapple and the Rubinoos. The flip is an equally atonal, ear-splitting cover of "High Hopes" that no doubt made Sinatra cringe. —Jimmy Alvarado (Richmond, richmondrevisited.bigcartel.com)

GORILLA: It's All Pop: 12"

I had the fortune to see Gorilla. The band tore it up and had only a cassette to sell. I was so into the set I wanted to buy the tape five times. Hidden Volume has made this Tokyo-based band easy to locate with an EP of six new songs by this power pop powerhouse that shouldn't be missed. It's high-level, Raspberries / Big Star style rock with some rattling punk movement in the center. Lots of solid harmonizing over loud guitars. There's not a clanger on the album. If you're into late-era Registrators, this is a no-brainer. —Billups Allen (Hidden Volume)

GRIT: Diamond: 7"

Four tracks of U.K. 82/oi-influenced punk coming from Dublin. This is good stuff, mid-tempo and melodic with Clodagh's no-nonsense vocals hitting hard. This takes me back thirty-five years to when I was listening to bands like Blitz, The Partisans, and Vice Squad. Lyrics cover social and political issues, and have much in common with the aforementioned bands. There is also a lot of unity and looking out for friends running through the songs, too, adding some positivity to proceedings. This is up there with contemporaries Rixe and Syndrome 81. —Rich Cockledge (Distr-Oil, dstroyrecords.com)

GROSS POLLUTER: Running Wild: 7"

Gross Polluter is back with their second 7". I reviewed their debut last issue, but if you don't remember it's a bunch of guys from Smogtown with the guy from Ciril on vocals. Like the first one, this kick all kinds of ass. Darrin's vocal delivery reminds me a lot of John Ransom from the Smut Peddlers, which fits right in with these guys (although word has it that he's split, and Chavez is back in the lead vocal spot). I love the keyboard bits throughout. Beach punk will never die, especially with bands like Gross Polluter kicking sand in our faces. —Ty Stranglehold (No Front Teeth)

HANNAH RACECAR: Renovations: CD

A palindrome band name is a fine way to get my attention. And then

Jawbreaker-era Schwarzenbach vocals over raucous post-punk tunes is how you keep it. What you've got here is a group who was raised as Jesus And Mary Chain and grew into Beach Slang. I'm actually really surprised how well the bass comes through in all that haze of guitar distortion. This stuff is a shoe-gaze that I'd bet their pedals have pedals! But then there are these wonderfully pretty leads sprinkled throughout to help bridge the songs between fogs of fuzz. It manages to be dreamy and keep you wide eyed at the same time. But it's far from being a bout of narcolepsy. Hannah Racecar lulls you into a daze, but the transition to driving rhythm and loud-as-hell guitars is packaged with harmonies so it's never too jarring to go from one end to the other. It's pretty and sleepy and so inherently '90s college rock-inspired. —Kayla Greet (Self-released)

HÄPEÄ:

Ei Sota Vain Miestä Kaipaa... : 7" EP

Finnish hardcore that comes in and just pummels the shit out of everything in the room. They deliver in the region's "classic" mode, a fond of Tampere SS, Terveet Kadet, Rattus, and like are gonna love this. —Jimmy Alvarado (Tampere Hardcore Coalition, tamperehardcore@gmail.com)

HARDWARE: Demo: 7"

What we've got here is a nine-song demo by a band from Massachusetts



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that has now been pressed onto ■ 7" single. Fast and noisy with really snotty vocals, this is just the kind of hardcore punk that I like. I would be inclined to think that this band absolutely slays in a live setting. Would love to see them on a bill with Midgut and Altered State from Denver. If you like your hardcore noisy and loud but with some songwriting at the core, this is ■ great band to check out. I am very interested in hearing the recently released LP after hearing this. —Mike Frame (Not Like You)

HARDWARE: Demo: 7"

Holy hell, what a fucking glorious racket! I think this is a vinyl pressing of their original demo and I ■■■ totally blown away. This is nine tracks of dark, brooding female-fronted hardcore that tend to go down the dark road of Void-like feedback and fury without stepping on anyone's toes. So fucking great. I'm off to buy the limited test pressing, which ■■■ hopefully still available ■ you read this. —Garrett Barnwell (Not Like You, notlikeyourecords.com)

HIP PRIESTS, THE: *Those Fuckin' Boys—A Decade of Disdain*: CD

Holy fucking tear-my-face-off awesome! I've never heard Nottingham's the Hip Priests before this graced my mailbox, but I'm completely sold. This is a CD of the band's singles from the last ten years, and not ■■■ of the twenty-seven songs left me disappointed. It's seventy-six

minutes of high-octane punk with hints of barroom rock the likes of the B-Movie Rats, but the lyrics throw in a heavy dose of Catholic debauchery. Fantastic. —The Lord Kveldulfr (Ghost Highway)

HI-STANDARD: *Another Starting Line*: 7"

It has been at least two decades since I last listened to this band from Japan. Back ■■ Fat Wreck Chords and sounding very much the same, Hi-Standard are still laying down that mid-'90s Epifat slick punk sound. These appear to be the first new recordings in ■ decade and a half and they have picked up right where they left off. If you were ■ fan before, you will wanna be all over this. If you always wondered about this band, this is ■ good ■ place as any to start. —Mike Frame (Fat Wreck Chords)

IDYLL'S, THE: *Why*: 7"

Reissue of a recording originally from 1980. Not ■ repress of the vinyl but ■ cache of unplayed "dead stock" recently discovered. Both tunes here are decent stabs of punky-wavy-pop true to the time it was originally released—maybe a bit darker in delivery than many of the other punters—but they put in some good work nonetheless. Nice historical artifact for the collectors and ■ couple o' good tunes for the rest of us. —Jimmy Alvarado (Richmond, richmondrevisited.bigcartel.com)

IMPALER: *Cellar Dweller*: LP

This sounds like ■ pack of rabid dogs chasing down a cop on a desolate, rundown street of ■ Central Texas suburb. Searing and ferocious d-beat-inspired hardcore punk. It's cranked up, and blasting ■ full-throttle. The manifestation of punching ■■■■■ straight in the face. Your thoughts speed up. Primal instincts take over. You turn into ■■■■■ you don't ■■■■ recognize. Ruthless and highly recommended. —Daryl (540)

ISOTOPE ■■■■ *Phantom Chaos*: 12" EP

Their last EP was ■ hoot, and this is no less swell. Crazy synth punk delivered with ■ hardcore sensibility is the order of the day here. Phantom Limbs, Screamers, Flesh Eaters and many others echo throughout, while delivering a sound all their own. Right fuckin' corker this is. —Jimmy Alvarado (Levande Bevgrad, levandebegrad1@gmail.com)

JAMES RAY JR.: *Self-titled*: 12" Self-titled

The mumbling vocals don't sound completely bored but rather devoid of passion or conviction. I visualize the vocalist as the dude at the dive bar with expensive whiskey, vaping and murmuring soft-spoken "thank yous" in between songs while he takes too long to switch guitars. I put this between indie zone-out and sleepy pop shoegaze. I imagine endless pedal boards and many hours of post-production plug-ins, but that's about

all. The B side picks up the pace ■ little bit, with a little hint of blues without committing to anything. It is pleasant adult contemporary, tame enough for a Starbucks compilation and, coincidentally, I needed coffee to get through the whole thing. —Sal Go (JamesRayJr.com.)

JOINT ■ ■: *Intelligence*: LP

In its heyday North Carolina was booming with hardcore punk talent, as documented on the excellent but rarely heard *No Core* compilation which featured a then relatively unknown Corrosion Of Conformity. Much later on, the scene once again flourished; this time spearheaded by the likes of Double Negative, No Love, Brain F≠ and, of course, Joint D≠. On their third full length, Joint D≠ continues that proud tradition of no holds barred hardcore and ups the ante with social-politically minded lyrics. Song after song of sonic abrasiveness: if their live persona lives up to these recordings then these folks must surely slay onstage. A perfect follow up—if not a surpassing feat—to their previous album, *Satan Is Real Again, Again...* Sorry State and NC on top, y'all. —Juan Espinosa (Sorry State)

KADTETTU TULEVAISUUS:

Vapaa Tahto: LP

Looks like these Fins have been around for twenty-five years! Fair play, lads. Bog standard old school Fin pogo punk, not unlike the UK Subs or more recent spiky tops the

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Restarts (think UK82 vibes). It's fine. Really. It's fine. But I don't really need another mediocre Finnish punk band's 7". —Tim Brooks (Save The Wild Animals)

KUROISHI: Poverty, Ignorance, Greed, Slavery: 12"

Very good and competent crusty punk along the lines early Tragedy. The riffs are good and the recording is excellent, with lyrics flipping between English and Finnish. There is a cool rock'n'roll vibe to some of the songs (think *1977* of the earlier Coliseum stuff) that will appeal to the more musically inclined crust punks who prefer a little swagger to their gloomy destruction. Solid release in all. —Ian Wise (SPHC, sphrecords. bandcamp.com)

LANDSPEEDER:

Hard Merchandise: 7" EP

Admittedly, a Star Wars-themed pop punk band dressed in (kinda) matching Imperial Forces uniforms is a pretty fucking, uh... stupid idea. Amazingly, these guys somehow make it work, with fuzzy, long-con guitars offsetting the high, cartoony vocals, and a general (grievous?) *1977* of Something Of Importance And Worth lurking in the background. I'm not sure exactly what the hell they're singing about, but I'd imagine it to be all these brilliant Star Wars references used metaphorically to convey deep truths about the human condition. Whenever I imagine otherwise, my collar gets inexplicably

tight and I can't breathe, and we're going with that. **BEST SONG:** "Into the Pit." **BEST SONG TITLE:** "Sarlaac Soliloquy." **AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** You'll never guess this, but the record is broken up into a "Light Side" and a "Dark Side," using corresponding insigniae on the labels. —Rev. Nørð (Milkspop)

LEE BAINS III & THE GLORY FIRES:

Youth Detention (Nail My Feet Down to the Southside of Town): CD

Lee Bains III & The Glory Fires caught me at the right time. Recently, I have found myself deep diving into the back catalog of rock royalty: Creedence Clearwater Revival, Fleetwood Mac, and Neil Young. So, I've been eager to hear rock'n'roll revitalized—and this quartet claims to be the "real Alabama rock'n'roll." Although at *1977* instantly familiar (you've felt many of these hooks before), they marvelously fuse the soulfulness of Greg Cartwright of Reigning Sound with the reckless energy of the Black Lips. However, at seventeen songs, *Youth Detention* drags, for each song clocks in around three minutes. Additionally, the mix leaves something to be desired because the vocals sound buried. Sure, it's as if you're listening to a band in a dive bar through a shitty sound system, but, after multiple listens, I wanted to sing along and the production wasn't doing me any favors. If *Youth Detention* was simply leaner and meaner, I would wholeheartedly recommend

it—as it is, it fell short of the real deal. —Sean Arenas (Don Giovanni, dongiovannirecords.com)

LIFE WENT PEAR: Demo: CD

If I wasn't staring at the very sweet note sent along with this six-song demo from Germany's Life Went Pear, I would have thought it was a new Leatherface record. That's okay with me because I love Leatherface, but it's actually amazing how this vocalist manages to do such a good Frankie Stubs impression. This is a fun, gritty, and melodic demo that I'll listen to again. —Theresa W. (Self-released)

LILLINGTONS, THE: Project 313: 7" EP

It's been a long time coming, but the Lillingtons are back with new material. So long, in fact, it feels weird to even write it. So, let's go back a bit, shall we? It's 1998 and I'm in a local record store in Ottawa. I end up leaving with a copy of their *Shit out of Luck* LP, never having heard the band, simply because of the B-Face artwork on the cover and description on the label. Putting the needle on the record when I got home, I instantly knew it was going to be a game-changer. And it was; that album was huge for me, no question: the perfect high school record. I was getting pretty knee-deep in garage and hardcore at the time, but I loved my Lookout! Records bands. The Lillingtons never made it big by any means, but they were highly influential. In their next phase of "spy" punk, if you will, there was a band after

band trying to copy what they did (with *Death by Television* and *The Backchannel Broadcast*, specifically). But those were weird times, too. Pop punk all but went into hiding in the early-to-mid-2000s. Either way, after a few reunion appearances (including a Montreal gig I had to miss due to my own band playing Japan), they've given us some new work, and it's far from a letdown. It's quite impressively solid. The production is a bit on the beefy side for me, but I'm a weirdo that likes guitars that sound like they were recorded in a trashcan, so what do I know? People will love it. —Steve Adamyk (Red Scare)

LION'S LAW / STARS AND STRIPES: Heritage: 7"

Paris's Lion's Law (you know them from their appearance in that one Beyonce music video!) figured out how to construct the perfect oi anthem a few years ago and have somehow continued to replicate new oi without sounding stale or rehashed. They remind me of early Dropkick Murphys, Discipline, some of the more rock-oriented Cock Sparrer stuff, et al and definitely inhabit that territory of the genre that's more melody than grit, though they do it better than almost anyone. They do a new number on this one and a cover of the old Stars And Stripes tune "The Power and the Glory" that is a lot more polished than the original. Boston's Stars And Stripes are a



band that I've honestly ignored after their first LP and 7", though seeing them recently I was surprised at how much I actually enjoyed their set, so I [REDACTED] into this without prejudice. They do [REDACTED] cover of a Lion's Law song ("Knock 'Em Out") that's so-so but has some pretty cool guitar leads. Their new track is good, more evil and plodding than their earlier material. —Ian Wise (Contra, contra-net.com)

LOOSE VEINS: *Observations*: CS

Solid four-song debut EP all the way from Kouvola, Finland. *Observations* is giving [REDACTED] all the late-'90s-pop-punk-bordering-rock vibes, like a heavier Millencollin or Pennywise but way less bro-centric and with more ambivalent references to global politics. —Candace Hansen (looseveins.bandcamp.com)

LOST BALLOONS: "Liquor Store"

ft/w "Dirty Sandy": 7"

There is seemingly no end to the magic of Jeff Burke's music. Lost Balloons is his partnership with Yusuke Okada and they unleashed their slice of pop heaven on the world with 2015's self-titled debut album. Here we are a couple of years later with [REDACTED] brand new LP and this two song 7". "Liquor Store" is a Burke song that could fit in with any of his outfits. It's raw and beautiful. The flip [REDACTED] "Dirty Sandy," [REDACTED] Okada song that first appeared on their debut album but [REDACTED] completely different form.

I've listened to them back to back, and they barely resemble the same song. Good thing both versions are great! I love this band, and you probably will too! —Ty Stranglehold (Wild Honey, wildhoneyrecords.bandcamp.com)

MACHO BOY: *Half-Jihad*: LP

Snarling, feral hardcore that sounds like [REDACTED] long-lost '80s classic. They keep the delivery loose 'n' raw, with its hooks insidiously buried well within to keep the listener gleefully thrashing along for its sixteen-or-so-minute length. Thumbs decidedly up. —Jimmy Alvarado (Neck Chop, facebook.com/NeckChopRecords)

MAD PARADE: *Gangsters*: 7"

Two more tunes from this venerable San Gabriel Valley institution. The title track sees 'em branching out a little, with a dose of minor-chord country serving as the backbone to a tune that plunders the darker corners of the mind. On the flip, "Bitter End," they revert to the classic Britain-via-Southern California sound they've honed into a finely wielded weapon for a tune about a love that's disintegrated into "an illicit act of war." Thirty-four years since I first saw 'em in [REDACTED] Hollywood hellhole. They still pull killer new songs out of the ether like nobody's business and deliver 'em with [REDACTED] vigor that [REDACTED] new bands can't even seem to muster. Thumbs way up. —Jimmy Alvarado (Gutterwail, madparade.biz)

MAD SIN: *Mad Sin Classics*: 2 x CD

Long-running psychobilly juggernaut Mad Sin is [REDACTED] German group that sounds to me like a hybrid of rockabilly and Motörhead, with jowly vocals and furious upright bass riffing. Definite metal, punk, and country influences [REDACTED] present on this album, and though it probably sounds terrible from my description, it was [REDACTED] very enjoyable listen. If you wanna stomp, jive, or mosh, you might be able to do all of the above with this two-CD set. Judging by the recordings, it seems like they'd be great live, too. —Cheyenne Neckmonster (Concrete Jungle)

MAGNUM FORCE: *Discography*: LP

Do you feel a void in your hardcore heart? Are you burned out on Charles Bronson's *Complete Discography* and Scholastic Deth's *Final Examiner*? Then, behold Magnum Force's discography and, boy, it's an endurance test: thirty-nine powerviolence songs in roughly forty-five minutes. Remembered mostly for their split with ACxDC and Sex Prisoner, Magnum Force, from Arizona, had a slew of hard-to-find releases besides the three-way split. Although nothing here is essential, I love [REDACTED] a good discography. Maybe it's because I'm [REDACTED] compulsive collector and having everything in [REDACTED] place makes things neat and tidy. Or maybe, when [REDACTED] band consistently shreds like Magnum Force, a trip through their entire catalog puts [REDACTED] smile on my face. The

only downside: [REDACTED] track listing. Then again, why the hell would you need a track listing for [REDACTED] powerviolence record? Just listen to the whole damn thing all over again! —Sean Arenas (To Live A Live, tolivealie.com / 502 Push Wait)

MAJUNG PRISM

Ritalin for the Masses: CD

Demo CD of some primitive, grungy, rock angst. They have [REDACTED] sound, [REDACTED] thing they're clearly aiming for, but just need [REDACTED] better songwriting to turn it into something that people will want to pay attention to. —Chad Williams (Self-released, malfunprism.bandcamp.com)

MARK CONE: *Now Showing*: LP

Take the Screemers out of the Masque and stick 'em in [REDACTED] CBGB's Sunday matinee. Rabid Casio-driven punk with New York tough guy vocals. It's fucking rad. Weird and adventurous and totally kills. Helmed by Jackieboy of Urochromes and Sediment Club, *Now Showing* plays like an incidental rock opera. Follow the travels of Mark Cone as they traverse this decrepit wasteland of a country, confronting the scum and busting the [REDACTED] wide open for the rest of [REDACTED] to look inside. —Daryl (Neck Chop)

MEXICAN WOLFBOYS:

Skatization of the Christian World: LP

Metallic, '80s-style punk from Germany, complete with "yeah, we like AC/DC, and bet you do, too"

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flourishes. Nothing groundbreaking here, but it's hard not to like a song called "sixsixsixstring." File under: I'd drink a beer with these dudes. —Chris Terry (Rockstar, rockstarrecords.de)

MIDNIGHT RERUNS:

Spectator Sports: LP

Midnight Reruns fits somewhere in the shelf between fellow Midwesterners Tenement and Purple 7. They share the inventiveness and slacker attitude of the former, and the heartfelt indie pop sensibilities of the latter; however, Midnight Reruns melds their influences into something inspired. Songs like "Hold Up the Mirror," "Cicada 3301," "Birthmarks/Fingerprints," and "Warm Days" boast infectious vocal melodies, original guitar licks, and enough twist and turns to ward off tedium. Sadly, the two instrumentals ("Celebrity Lawyers" and "Concourse C") feel like padding—no album honestly needs two instrumentals. With a few more choice cuts, *Spectator Sports* could have been a truly standout LP, though the hits make up for most of the shortcomings. —Sean Arenas (Dusty Medical, dustymedical.com)

MINIBEAST: From Will: LP

Second album of this instrumental project by Peter Prescott. I classify it as such because he plays all the instruments in the studio. Live, the sound is fleshed out by Keith Seidel on drums and Eric Baylies on bass.

But in this record we are treated to an experimental and other-worldly collage of sounds. Definitely not punk, but the flow will pull you in slowly and gently. There are loops and samples, but they don't overpower the songs. "Oily Morning Paper" and "I Buy Junk Gold" are ones I keep coming back to with the needle. "Bubblegum Disaster" tricks you into thinking it may just be a run-of-the-mill rock song. Then the vocals kick in and blast off to Saturn. Lead vocals? Catchy choruses? Not here. But drone-like excursions that don't require any chemicals to enjoy? Come inside—it is waiting for you. —Sean Koeppenick (Presco, iris.rigby@gmail.com)

MODERN WARFARE:

Complete Recordings and More: LP

Modern Warfare was one of the local Southern California bands that never really got a fair shake, by my reckoning. Despite two 45s and a handful of comp tracks, thanks in no small part to member Jimmy Bemis's other gig as head honcho at Bemisbrain Records, they're largely a footnote anymore. This is a bummer because their oeuvre is danged impressive. Much of their tunes work within the thrashy parameters popular in the early '80s, but they infuse them with a nice vein of "art," making the songs stutter, change gears, and lurch forward along often unorthodox structures, yet still managing to rock with the best of 'em. In addition to their complete output, the folks responsible have included

on the flip tracks from the band's prior incarnation, The Moderns, and several demos of more recent vintage by Bemis, plus a booklet of photos, flyers, lyrics, and the like. Nice to 'em get their overdue props and a nice opportunity to collect their works in one place. —Jimmy Alvarado (Rerun)

NAG: No Flag: 7"

Primal punk—sometimes dirgy, sometimes a bit faster, predominantly atonal, and a bit minimalist-art in delivery. —Jimmy Alvarado (Space Taker Sounds, spacetakersounds.com)

NIGHTMEN: C'est La Vie Goodbye: 7"

Completely great power-pop from Sweden, with a thin layer of echo and classic hooks and a hundred percent understated charm. I can't decide which song is the best (maybe "City of Fun"), but "Ahahahah (Oh No)" is the best song title I've read in ages. Will probably fly under the radar, so adjust your radar. —Matt Werts (Rockstar, rockstarrecords.de)

NO LOVE LIES:

Ghosts in the Anti-Machine: CD

Scribe (and *Razorcake* contributor) David Ensminger joins members of The Hates, Mydolls, and Drafted for some primo punk rock band action. A lot of disparate influences floating around in the mix, all filtered through punk, largely mid-tempo with a loose-but-focused delivery and a nice helping of Texas-punk "weird" to give

things an edge. A fun ride from start to finish and a prime example of why it's folly to dismiss the O.G.s, kids. Recommended. —Jimmy Alvarado (Left Of The Dial, leftofthedialmag@hotmail.com)

NO LOVES: Plum Crazy: LP

Slavish devotees of the High Impact Paint colors found on Dodge® muscle cars of the early '70s (of which "Plum Crazy" was one, with "HEMI® Orange" probably being the best-remembered of the lot) (see also: *Dukes of Hazzard*, General Lee, et al), these Nashvillians don't stray too far from the Nashville Pussy-or-maybe-Zeke-or-the-Supersuckers-styled whiskey-and-cocaine rock that thrilled audiences fifteen or twenty years ago (minus most of the whiskey and cocaine references; the only mention of either being the anti-blow "Eight Ball"), aimed in a more cars-and-girls direction. As cliché as this whole particular beat may be, the record never got as stupid that I got upset with its existence, which is certainly something, and the songs about girls are actually nice enough that I hadda wonder if these guys were all in pop punk bands who repented after seeing Nashville Pussy or Nine Pound Hammer or something like that back in the day. That said, the singer sounds significantly more convincing when he's growling about automotive topics—"Hawg Ride," "Mopar Man," "Mud on the Tires"—than when he attempts to tunelessly modify his

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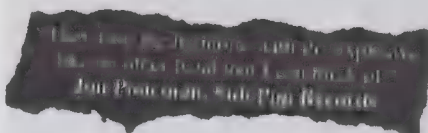
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growling to sing about gurlz—"I Can't Sleep," "Plum Crazy," "I Wanna Be"—so plan accordingly. I don't know that this record completely transcended the clichés of the genre for me, but they tried (slide guitar in "Mud on the Tires," a veritable .38 Special-flavored guitar hero quasi-ballad with "I Wanna Be"), and I do like purple, ■ we'll call it ■ draw. I wish Doug Evans was alive so I could re-gift this to him. BEST SONG: "Pickup Line," or possibly "Mud on the Tires." BEST SONG TITLE: "Plum Crazy." As I said, I like purple. FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: The vinyl itself is, in fact, "plum crazy" colored. Way to stay on message! —Rev. Nørb (Stiff Pole, stiffpolerecords.com)

NO USE FOR A NAME:

Rarities Vol. 1: The Covers: LP/CD

This is the second recent release from Fat featuring ■ band doing covers and, for me, this tramples all over the Teenage Bottlerocket offering. The uniqueness of NUFAN's wall of rhythm guitar cannot be ignored and on this collection, it provided the initial focus when I ran through the album for the first time. It's not like Dag Nasty's "I've Heard" needs that boost, although it does add ■ new dimension to the song. However, the "wall" does add ■ kick to Depeche Mode's "Enjoy the Silence" and The Vapors' "Turning Japanese," making them seem sonically enhanced. I love these songs, and in no way do I feel that NUFAN is stepping on

sacred ground with its versions. In fact, all the tracks featured ■ great fun to listen to, even the songs I'm ambivalent towards—The Pogues and Kirsty MacColl's "Fairytale of New York" being ■ prime example—and this is a strong reminder of the ability of ■ band rightly revered by many. —Rich Cocksedge (Fat Wreck)

NOTCHES: **Change My Mind: 7"**

Tender lyrics and vocals paired with ginourmous, warm guitars. Take the least pathetic aspects of emo, indulgent college rock guitar, and that uncategorizable DIY approach to punk that makes you ■ instant fan and friend. Give this to me when I'm down, give it to me when I'm up. This is for blasting year around. Cool in the summer and ■■■■■ in the winter. Authenticity like this is what feeds the soul. A young band giving it everything they got. Get some. —Daryl (Dead Broke / Cat Dead Details Later)

NOTHING OF MERIT: **Use of Ease: LP**

Riding the violent ebb and flow of damaged, label-smashing punk, Nothing Of Merit proudly waves the Texas freak flag across *Use of Ease*. From the blistering early-L.A. pop snot of "All BS in the End," to the blues trash wriggle and stagger of "Factor of 10" or "Stop," to the sax skronk, thrashing plod of "Australia" and "Station," NOM have carved their logo into the Lone Star registry right next to Big Boys and Dicks. Imagine

if the Thrown Ups had been a band ■ the *Cottage Cheese from the Lips of Death* comp and you're somewhere in the Nothing Of Merit ballpark... high praise, indeed. 180 gram blue vinyl. —Matt Seward (Reason For Resistance, nothingofmerit.bandcamp)

NOTHINGTON: **Cobblestones: 7"**

This looks to be ■ nice little Record Store Day release, basically just ■ track from their latest, *In the End* coupled with ■ acoustic version of old time favorite "(the) Last Time" from 2007's *All In*. For me, every day is Record Store Day, ■ maybe this has some meaning for some collector geek out there; otherwise just grab the awesome *In The End* instead. —Garrett Barnwell (Red Scare, redscare.net)

OBNOX: **Niggative Approach: LP**

Genre bending at its finest. Lamont Thomas, the one-man band that is Obnox, creates ■ deep, heady stew of noise, punk, funk, hip-hop, and R&B that is somehow polished as much as it is complete chaos. The album opens with ■ sample from Negative Approach's John Brannon—hence the play on the album title and song title—and slowly, song by song, steep into a deep trance of thick bass, ■ spattering of horns, keyboard synth, and Parliament-esque funk. It's punk yet also completely not punk, and it's dumbfounding how seamlessly lines get blurred. This particular album continues Thomas's evolution into broad, spacey territory

that is undeniably diverse. It can speak to many different audiences, and it's totally enthralling. —Camylle Reynolds (12XU)

OLIVIA NEUTRON-JOHN: **"Injury Train and I'm Never Getting Off It" b/w "Vulnerability": 12" single**

The first few minutes of the A-side consist of three synthesizer notes and ■ shitty drum machine with someone wailing over it for ■ while. Other sounds happen later. I don't know much about Yoko Ono, but this sounds like the person who made it maybe thinks that Yoko Ono is very cool. Which... okay, whatever. The flip side feels slightly more melodic, or maybe the first twenty-two-minute track has softened my brain and lowered my bar so far that I can't tell anymore. This project is probably going for ■ post-noise/post-ambient/post-post-post-punk sound for whoever in the world has been waiting for that. I don't know who sits down and puts this record on, but someone out there does. Congratulations, you've mystified the squares again. —Indiana Laub (Gilgongo, jamesfella@hotmail.com, gilgongorecords.com)

OXIDANT: **Deconstruct: 7"**

Solid debut from Raleigh, N.C. hardcore quartet Oxidant. Songs ■■ mostly political, with the exception of "pressure build," ■ song about ■ cat's anxiety. Heavy and fast like powerviolence should be. —Candace Hansen (To Live A Lie)



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PANDEMIX:**Pathological Culture: Flexi 7"**

Pathological Culture is the first demo release from Boston anarcho-punk Pandemix, reissued as a two-sided clear flexi. Dark, thrashy, and sometimes a little chanty, *Pathological Culture* has a lot to offer and is a great new band for fans of political punk like G.L.O.S.S. and Aus Rotten. Flexi tends to skip a little, but it's punk as fuck. —Candace Hansen (Flexi Punk! / Boss Tuneage)

PANDEMIX:**Scale Model of Atomic Bomb CD**

Pandemix makes dark mid-tempo peace punk that foregrounds political commentary, complete with samples of TV news stories and polemic spoken-word segments. The snotty vocals demonstrate significant range, from raging hoots and woofs, to plaintive moans, to that special brand of scathing punk oration that typically breaks up live sets or opens tracks that describe a specific kind of suffering or injustice. I appreciate Pandemix's willingness to take up a position and defend it, sonically and literally, with the formal consistency that political punk demands. It's an angry record that compels you to share its anger; it makes you want to scream, and that's the point. —Lyle (Boss Tuneage)

PASSENGERS, THE: Self-titled: LP

The Passengers are a hooky rock 'n' roll band from Brooklyn, N.Y. While there's really very little here that

would excite a punker with an appetite for speed and aggression, there are a lot of good, catchy rock 'n' roll songs on this twelve-song LP. Once or twice I was almost getting some Cheap Girls vibes from this, and these were really my favorite parts of this listen, but those moments are too few and far between, unfortunately. If you're not afraid of some rootsy rock/power pop with a slight '80s influence (especially with that guitar tone), this might possibly be right up your alley. —Mark Twistworthy (Sleeping T-Rex, thepassengersny.bandcamp.com)

PERKULATOR: Self-titled: LP

Crusty metal with topical lyrics and tons of fanned single notes on the guitar. Not my cup o' poison at all. —Jimmy Alvarado (Crush And Create)

PIG/CONTROL: Vor Den Mauern: LP

Potent thrash outta Germany. They start off by whippin', hootin', n' hollering in fine dissonant form, then start slowing things down a bit most of the way through, and end with a driving, almost hypnotic ditty that lasts just shy of seven and a half minutes. Mandatory listening for your next afternoon tea party. —Jimmy Alvarado (Sabotage, sabotagerecords.net)

PISsing MATCH: Break the Seal: 7"

Pissing Match had a ripper the *Feral Kid Mixtape Volume II* compilation, which I reviewed in issue 90, and this 7" is a split release between that

label and the band. *Break the Seal* features fifteen tracks, including re-recorded versions of the ten tracks on their cassette demo, and some new material. With a total runtime of a little over six minutes, Pissing Match cram a lot of rage into short bursts of hardcore punk fury. While their lyrical outlook can't be described as "sunny," at least they'll never piss on your leg and say it's raining. —Paul J. Comeau (Feral Kid, xFeral_Kidx@yahoo.com, pissingmatchpunk@gmail.com)

PISsing MATCH: Break the Seal: 7"

Sweet cover art of a couple of Jeff Gaither-like monsters popping a hubcap off a wheel, which does a decent job of showcasing the misanthropy inside. With sixteen songs on a 7", you've got a decent idea as to just how quick these hardcore blasts are. Unfortunately, twenty-second songs don't leave a lot of room for lyrical wizardry, but Pissing Match manage to solve that issue by just going ahead and hating everybody evenly across the board. Politicians, atheists, Black Bloc, and bad drivers all face their wrath. The lyrics really are pretty bad, but I'll admit that "Piss Test" made me laugh out loud: "Can't get a job / Without pissing in a cup. / And I'M NOT PISsing IN A CUP." —Keith Rosson (Pissing Match, pissingmatch.bandcamp.com / Feral Kid)

PLATINUM BOYS: Buzz: LP

With apologies to any friends in bands named such, the current trend of

bands being named "(fill in the blank) Boys" is tired... just really played out. Are there no good band names left? Platinum Boys, despite their moniker, offer up a pretty solid slab of '80s-influenced power pop mixed with a heavy dose of '70s classic rock bravado. The guitar leads in these songs really steal the show, sometimes bringing Cheap Trick to mind, other times Thin Lizzy. It's all rock 'n' roll, really. I can't say that they nail it one hundred percent of the time, but the good times certainly outweigh the bad on this release. —Mark Twistworthy (Dusty Medical, dustymedical.com)

PLAYBOY: Celebration: LP

Squawky chaos, somewhere between Skatenigs and Butthole Surfers. Rhythmic and hypnotic, but after a while the songs tend to blend together until the closer, "Outside," which changes approach enough to stand out. —Jimmy Alvarado (Negative Jazz, facebook.com/negativejazz)

PLRLS: Have You Seen**Fancy Pony: CD**

Good Devo and evil B-52's with harmonized dude and lady vocals from Baltimore. A barrage of unpredictable new wave and post-punk influences, seamlessly transitioning from pop-pretty to paranoid creepiness. Organs and choppy guitars fit neatly alongside repetitive, hypnotic bass lines that sometimes accompany a call and response conversation or shouting about unicorns and hitmen. It's fun,

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not pretentious. "Right Rebel" makes me want to sing along, if only I could hit those notes. Last but not least, the artsy nature of the band bleeds into their packaging—there's a coloring book and a crayon included! Only color, but red is my favorite anyway. It really feels like they care. —Sal Go (pirls.com)

POLYCHROME VIOLENCE:

Americhrome: 7"

Equal parts Mutant Pop and Lookout Records boiled out until all the nutritional value is gone and then smushed into a protein blob that doesn't exactly go down easy. On a good day this is forgettable and on a bad day it's annoying. A swing and a miss, sorry. —Ian Wise (American Sedation)

PROCESS OF ELIMINATION:

Self-titled: 7"

Neck Chop is quickly proving to be one of the labels to watch out for this year. There really hasn't been a dud yet. I'd never heard of Process Of Elimination before, but it seems to be a one-person operation out of Cali similar to SBF and Catatonic Youth. Drum machine punk that's nice and angry. It appears to be a selection of cuts from their debut cassette, which you probably can't find. Rip this loud. —Steve Adamyk (Neck Chop)

RADIOACTIVITY:

"Infected" b/w "Sleep": 7"

Even when Jeff Burke & Co. aren't firing off painfully addictive hooks,

they still create songs that are a craftsmanship that bring you in. These two tracks are quick and relatively subdued compared to the rest of their catalogue, yet they make their own space, a space I keep finding myself returning to. Only a band as great as Radioactivity could pull off a double B side 7" like this. Put this on between repeat listens of the LPs. —Daryl (Wild Honey, wildhoneyrecords@hotmail.com)

RADIOACTIVITY:

"Infected" b/w "Sleep": 7"

Radioactivity do no wrong in my eyes/ears. Call that bias if you must, but I know I am not alone in this opinion. Beautiful pop/rock that is so well crafted that it makes me make the crustiest curmudgeon sway back and forth with a big dumb grin on his face (or so I'm told). This was unexpected 7" when they were out on their West Coast tour earlier this year on Italian label Wild Honey (who also release a new *Lost Balloons 7"* at the time). My heart swells for this! —Ty Stranglehold (Wild Honey, wildhoneyrecords.bandcamp.com)

RATS BLOOD: **Ugly: 7"**

Rats Blood offers up gut-wrenching and diaphragm-rattling d-beat on its latest release. The six tracks along with guitars buzzing and drums being beaten into submission as vocals are dragged up through the trachea, before they are unleashed, if from

the pits of hell. I like this a lot but have to admit to preferring the band's 2014 *Punks Is Mutants LP* that has a more dynamic and less compressed sound. —Rich Cocksedge (Distro-y, distroyrecords.com)

RATS KRÄTER: **Ugly: CD**

Started off with an interesting bit of synth damage before quickly switching gears into the arty side streets of garageland. Engaging, and isn't it into picking out its own navel lint that it forgets to be catchy. —Jimmy Alvarado (Conquest Of Noise, conquestofnoise.com)

RED KATE /

STIFF MIDDLE FINGERS: Split: 7"

Kansas City's Red Kate opens up with "Urban Church." Don't be fooled, 45 RPM is the correct speed. Squealing and squirming, this shit shreds at frequencies that made my dog anxious. These guys have the energy and passion to cause even the most devout to doubt their doctrine. On to "Hole"; the more you fill it, the more structure crumbles away. Clamoring to keep it together, stuffing it up with whatever loose ends are laying about; it's just a temporary solution to combat the ever-expanding void, a chasm that will inevitably swallow me entirely. Ripping it up and tearing it down, Red Kate understands your discontent and will hand you the sledge hammer. I don't know what they are putting in the water

down in Lawrence, Kan., but here's another band that's kicking ass and captivating its prisoners. Stiff Middle Fingers' "3 Minutes to Midnight" reads like a demented, depressed Dr. Seuss poem and sounds like a good old cow punk hoedown. The sentiment can be summed up by these few lines: "Looking in a trashcan is like looking in a mirror. A reeking pile of shit it's almost more than I can bear. My lust for life is growing thinner than my fucking hair." Any angry, aging punk approaching forty can relate. Listen loud and listen much. The production is stellar. —Jackie Rusted (black-site.org)

RENAISSANCE:

True Places Never Are: LP

Power chord pop with melodies carried vocally between the negative spaces of the downstrokes as the bass and drum propel the tunes forward. Superchunk (*No Pocky and Throwing Seeds* era) playing your dorm Thursday night party. More college freshman punk than senior year indie rock, best encapsulated in the "Dead Meadow vs Ramones" quote before "Chapter Two." Current and ex-members of Worriers, The Backup Plan, and Capital. Recommended. —Matt Seward (Tour Van / Emily)

RICHIE RAMONE: **"I Fix This"**

b/w "Pretty Poison": 7"

Aside from the fact that I feel like we reached peak Ramones saturation about a bajillion years ago, there's

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■ refuting the fact that Richie seems to be having ■ blast here and sounds vocally, much to his credit, like ■ monster yanked off a barstool and put in front of ■ microphone. He's gotten ■ few young guns to come in and play with him and the result is ■ fun, punchy pair of songs. Think Heartbreakers, Sons Of Hercules, swaggering rock stuff like that. Dude is pushing sixty and still playing in bands—both singing and drumming—and that's definitely worth a tip of the hat. Produced by Paul Roessler of the Screemers, which was a cool little factoid to ■■■ across. —Keith Rosson (Outro)

RIPPER: *A Girl Feeling*: LP

What does it ■■■ when garage bands pose for record cover photos amidst live vegetation? It seems to indicate the end of some unspecified manner of cycle; if not the end of said cycle, then, ■ bare minimum, the start of its third act (assuming standard Aristotelian three-act structure is in play here, and why wouldn't it?). Somehow, I get the feeling that the band is trying to tell me something. I have no idea what it is. Yes, I get it, ■■■ in black amidst leaves and tree branches! But what does it all MEAN, man??? I cannot put my finger ■■ the pulse of their aesthetic throb for the life of me. These Sardinians (High five! Knuckle bump!) aren't really singing about blowing their minds or getting Brian Jones haircuts and partying with the ghost of Greg Shaw or attempting

to paint hallucinogenic portraits of lascivious young women, they're singing about...something. Something of potential depth and value, perhaps. Maybe the flavor gets wrung out of the thoughts in the translation to English, I dunno. Musically, they've got ■ thin, swift sound, somewhat plain though spiked with brief squalls of masterful harp-honk. It's nice, but seems like kind of a dry tongue with which to communicate these wet thoughts that I keep accusing them of having. The one song where I felt their tendrils briefly pierce thru the psychic miasma and connect with my mind was "Stop to Drive Me Mad." For all I know, these fuckers ■■ trying to summon Cthulhu on my dime. I'll get to the bottom of this yet. **BEST SONG AND SONG TITLE:** "Stop To Drive Me Mad." **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** Band members include Ripper I, Ripper II, Ripper III, and Ripper IV. —Rev. Nørb (Slovenly, slovenly.com)

RIPTIDES: *Canadian Graffiti*: CD

Okay, I definitely did ■ actual eye roll when the record started ■■ with a fart noise. But then what followed ■■ a high energy instrumental with some sharp leads. After that ■■ ventured into the shallow end of the pop punk pool, drawing on influences from The Queers, Teenage Bottlerocket, and that ilk, but in ■ good way. *Canadian Graffiti* stands up head and shoulders with the rest of the bubblegum punk produced by Sonic Iguana studios. Sure, this record is nothing but surface

level innocuous songs about chasing girls, and I have ■ problem with that 'cause they all have catchy-as-hell hooks. This record includes expert fills from Dan Lumley, guest vocals from Biff Naked, backup singing in all the right places, and songs about love to pogo to throughout. —Kayla Greet (Something To Do)

RVIVR: *The Thin* b/w "Shaggy": 7"

Name ■ more dynamic songwriting duo than Erica Freas and Mattie Jo Canino? This single is ■ fucking banger, aesthetically ■ somewhere between the intentional poetics of *Beauty Between* and the punk rawness of *The Joester Sessions*. Fans of Erica Freas's work may recognize ■■■ overlap between her solo record and this 7", but in ways that touch not leap. The songs breathe; they're driving and personal, with that complex energy that RVIVR brings like no one else. It feels like you got a page ripped out of ■ shared notebook filled with memories and ■■ moon intentions, drenched in raindrops, coffee stains, and the will to go on. The only mystery here is what the hell is that street sign on the cover? —Candace Hansen (One Brick Today)

SCIENCE PROJECT:

Basement Blues: 7"

Science Project picked the perfect ■■■ for their band. This EP sounds like ■ mad scientist went hard ■■ a synth in their basement laboratory in between experiments, with ■ faint

Ingo Boingo "Weird Science" vibe. The lyrics are a little indistinguishable, but I am okay with that. "Diary" harps on "pathetic social media," and the entire album's vocals ■■ done in ■ robotic monotone, backed by punk drumbeats. Minimal instruments, ■ maximum science feel. —Cynthia Pinedo (Neck Chop, neckchoprecords.com)

SETRACK: *Oceans Apart*: CD

Were this released some twenty years ago, it might have been caught in the wide net of major label ■■■■ that snatched up that '90s sound and elevated them to arena rock. This band would make sense opening for A Wilhelm Scream and The Offspring at the ■■■■ show. They're powerful, loud, melodic, and fucking fast. One guitar fluctuates between gritty pick slide tones and huge hi-fi riffs ala Thin Lizzy, while the other one flutters along the fret board, hitting an insane amount of notes. I feel like the bass gets buried in the production, but their drummer is like ■ caffeinated humming bird, to the point where you're nodding along to the back beat 'cause there's just too many hits to keep up with. Vocally, the lead singer wavers between Fat Mike and Chris Hannah for me. Honestly, I had judged this band by the packaging before I hit play. The artwork looks like it should be the cover for an early aughts electronic band (and two of the members thank god in the liner notes, to which I let out ■ audible



"Really?"). So here I was thinking I was getting a punk-influenced EDM record givin' it up to a sky spirit (obviously put your faith wherever you think is best, I just chose atheism), and I got something totally different. While it's not something I'd put into heavy rotation, I bet it could make for a great workout record. —Kayla Greet (Morning Wood)

SEX PRISONER: Tannhauser Gate: CS
Cassette pressing of Sex Prisoner's 2016 powerhouse LP. It's a pretty crushing record that straddles the line between powerviolence and jock hardcore pretty heavily; it's like Weekend Nachos but with more emphasis on the breakdowns. I don't guess that's necessarily a bad thing, but as a fan of their 7"s I loved how raw and unhinged they sounded and this moves in a different direction. I do like that they decided not to try and fill out a powerviolence LP with drawn-out sludge parts or electronic interludes like so many bands before them, but I'm not sure I'm really feeling the breakdowns, either. If you ever wanted to hear a Crossed Out/Xibalba hybrid, than this blood's for you. —Ian Wise (To Live A Lie, tolivealie.com)

SHIPWRECKED: Self-titled: 7"
Norway's cult USHC worship band drops another 7" into their surprisingly sparse catalog, which has consisted of a mere three records over the last twelve years. If you've heard them

before you know what you're getting, but if they have eluded you and you fancy yourself a fan of mid-'80s Boston HC, then this is something you need track down. "For the Fall" and "Right and Reason" slow it down a bit from their *The Last Pagans* LP from 2012, though the intensity is still there; "Onward" rages like SSD or early Gang Green. Crisp recording, shiny yellow wax. —Ian Wise (PSK)

SICK OF SHIT: Fuck You, Volume One: 7"
I've been trying to avoid negativity in my life lately, just generally, and it's been great. I feel good. But I'm making an exception for this *Sick of Shit 7"*, which is fast and pissed and deeply negative and perfect. A short burst of a hardcore EP that's sort of "I Have Angst 101" in the lyric department, so you know it's good. Black-and-white cross-hatched drawings of mutant/alien skulls will make you think this has been floating around distros since 1993, but this is a contemporary release. The first person thanked in the liner notes is Satan. This is real. —Matt Werts (Schizophrenic, schizophrenicx.com)

THOUGHTS: Songs about People You Hate: LP
Dude, Drew Owen has been labeled an "idiot savant musician," and I have to admit it's fucking true. Prolific as a mofo, which includes a smattering of other truly epic endeavors like *Chicken Chain*, *LS Dogs*, and *Deformities*, this

craze-stricken one-man-band delivers eleven burners, with his signature creepy, primitive punk that's heavy on the "fuck you." It's all sass and crass, and will have you questioning what more could you really ask from one man, let alone one album, you greedy little fuck. —Camylle Reynolds (Neck Chop)

SILVER SCREAMS: Defective Machines: 12" EP
Punk-heavy rock, or vice-versa. There's also a hint of country buried very, very deep down, which adds an odd '80s glam undertow to things, which I imagine isn't unintentional. The track that sparks best, though, is a cover of Joy Division's "Disorder," which stomps along in ways nothing preceding it does—which isn't to say what precedes it sucks, per se, just that the originals could use a bit of more of what informs and inspires them to put in a good cover of a band notoriously difficult to do justice. —Jimmy Alvarado (Silver Screams, silverscreams.us)

SINGLES, THE: Sweet Tooth: CD
I wish I could just write "holy fuck this is great, just buy it," but I feel like that would be doing The Singles a disservice. They remind me a lot of White Lung, The Vicious, and Arctic Flowers but a little slower and more rock'n'roll. Admittedly, that's what I've been listening to a lot lately so it may color my review more than it should. But they're certainly post-

punky with an emphasis on pre-punk (is that a thing?) influences. Let's throw a little bit of Terrible Feelings in as well. I just love the vocal effects. It sounds like if the singer had to take a few steps back from the mic 'cause her voice is so robust that it might be too much for the sound system to handle. Think Gaslight Anthem's *The '59 Sound*, only way better and stripped of the dripping Americana. Pretty songs about relationships that make for a great dance night. —Kayla Greet (Sound Artifacts)

SKEMATA: A Bright Shining Hell: 12"
It's hard to write d-beat that isn't, at the very least, derivative. Skemata, from North Carolina, do a good job at skewing the modern d-beat formula and are part of a small group of bands (Narcoleptics included in there, too) that are working within the confines of the genre but still creating music that is distinct and unique. The recording is lush, everything is bottom-heavy and slightly blown out, but it's crystal clear. Very cool, very refreshing release. —Ian Wise (Sorry State)

SKEPTICS: Self-titled: LP
The one, two punch of Manga-esque album art and the presence of Ramones cover ending the track listing had me initially guessing I would be dropping the needle on another overly typical pop punk release, ala the Apers. Very pleasantly surprised to be hypnotized by a lengthy opening salvo of navel-gazing fuzz guitar

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freakout, followed by hook-filled Cro-Magnon garage stomp. The sound of the smell of old leather, dirty shoes, and hangover sweat. But it's a wine hangover. Cause Skeptics from France. Spits fans take note. —Matt Seward (Beast, beastrecords.free.fr)

SKIFTANDE ENHETER: 4-Spårs: 7" EP
Swedish punk that sounds so old school that it'll have you scrambling for the cover to make sure it ain't some long-lost gem outta 1978 or so. They have the sound down pat—dialed in right down to the production quality and delivery—that it's kind of scary. —Jimmy Alvarado (Levande Bevgard, levandebegravd1@gmail.com)

SKULLCRACK: Full Blast: 7" EP
Fairly meat and potatoes thrash with a bit of metal in the guitars. Gallops along at a nice clip, pissed singer, and song lengths ensure they don't overstay their welcome. —Jimmy Alvarado (Skullcrack, skullcrackhc.bandcamp.com)

SLAM: Wild Riders of Boards: 7"
An obscure Scandinavian punk anthem gets a second life as a 7" single. Compiling two different takes, one from a Thrasher comp and the other from their only full length, this single lets you relive the glory of Wild Riders Of Boards. It's a simple skate punk anthem, but its power has lasted the test of time. If this released on a more prominent compilation, it surely would have been made its way

onto mixtapes the country. I'm super on board with labels doing re-releases of what could have been great old EPs. I know I would have stumbled upon this otherwise, and now I'm very glad that I have this my life. —Bryan Static (Not Like You, notlikeyourecords.com)

SLOUCH: Meadowfoam: CD
At first I thought this was a late release from defunct Olympia, Wash. queer punk band Slouch, but this is not the band. After popping this puppy in, I was like, "Woah, I haven't heard an honest-to-god grunge band in a minute," but before I could dig my flannel out of the back of my closet some abrupt metal riffage knocked me to my senses. I don't really know what to make of this tape. It's got light Pearl Jammy jams, pop- and metal-infused leads and break downs, and a whole lot of hours screaming along to Kurt Cobain in a speeding car coming through. I bet if this band broke up, there would be a really sick sludge band and a very good '90s rock cover band to come out of it. —Candace Hansen (Saint Rat)

SNAILS: Demos: EP
I'm a straight sucker for the new wave of weirdo lo-fi punk peddled by labels like Total Punk and Neck Chop. The cover looks like it was drawn by a three year old, no info apart from six tracks of out-there lo-fi punk. Think early Angry Samoans, Spits, and any number of no-mark Killed By Death bands from Nasty Facts to the Red

Squares. Twenty years from now, specy needs are going to be paying big bank for this absolute smoker of a single. Trust me. —Tim Brooks (Neck Chop, neck-chop-records.myshopify.com)

SNIVELLING SHITS: I Can't Come: LP
A vinyl reissue of the CD version of this collection originally released by the same label in 1989, which you get four additional tracks added to the eight featured on the original vinyl release. Always an acquired taste, the 'Shits where punk's first wave and biting met—a piss-take of their contemporaries and rock in general, courtesy of a journo and his malcontent pals. Sloppy, offensive, witty, D-U-M-B, hilarious, glorious. Worth the price of admission for the demo version of "Isgodaman" alone, and highly recommended for those who don't mind watching their trigger warnings topple like fuggin' dominos. —Jimmy Alvarado (Damaged Goods)

SOLARIZED: A New World: CS
The ghost of Keith Morris lives in this Philadelphia four-piece, which is impressive considering he's still alive. The lyrics reveal that these folks are very concerned with smashing the gender binary and with the legacies of HIV/AIDS for queer communities. Love seeing these kinds of unapologetic commitments in this sneering delight of a cassette, expressed with the sort of urgency you'd expect from a four-piece who

self-recorded this tape in their practice space. It's tighter and cleaner than the early punk heavyweights they're incanting into the room, but these four should be on tour with OFF!, if you ask me. It's got the kind of groove that's so often missing from straightforward punk outfits. I'd love to hear a full length from this band. —Theresa W. (Self-released)

SORE POINTS: Don't Want To: 7"
A while back I reviewed the demo tape by Vancouver's Sore Points. I loved it, and still do. They are easily one of the best bands in Vancouver right now. It's like Hosehead Records liked the tape a lot too, since they picked their favorite songs from the tape and put them on vinyl for those of us who suffer from cassettephobia. Cheers to that! Tough, yet catchy punk. I imagine this is what it would sound like if one of those amazing Denton, Texas pop punk bands were playing songs in the vein of Too Tough To Die-era Ramones. My plan is to see them live soon. I can't wait! —Ty Stranglehold (Hosehead, hoseheadrecords.ca)

SOV: Sick on Vacation: CDEP
Debut EP from this new, straightforward Dutch punk foursome. No frills, Fat/Epitaph (or at least what I consider Fat/Epitaph)-sounding stuff here. Filled with hooks that are short and to the point, without being too polished. Good stuff. —Steve Adamyk (Morning Wood, morningwoodrecords.com)



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SPOOKY, THE: *We Have Risen*: CD

Over the years, The Spooky have taken ■ genre ripe for ridicule and dismissal—"horror punk," spawned from the Misfits' early records and beaten into the fucking ground by a million lesser imitators—and managed to make tunes worth repeated listens. Their latest is no different, with song after song of anthemic and—dare I say?—poppy hooks and grim subject matter that makes the genre almost palatable, if only for the length this spins. Yer doin' god's work, boys. —Jimmy Alvarado (Nothing But A Nightmare)

STREET CLONES:

Black Cypress Grove: 7"

Mid-tempo punk with a singer whose approach is to speak rather than "sing." Not bad, not great, not particularly memorable. —Jimmy Alvarado (Mystery School, mysteryschoolrecords.bigcartel.com)

SUBSUMER: Demo Tape: CS

Subsumer is a great new queer punk / hardcore band from Seattle, Wash. Songs are fast, heavy, and pissed, with multiple vocalists screaming and singing meaningful lyrics. If the music isn't enough to get you interested, maybe the glittery silver tape will do it for you; definitely a bonus for me. Highly recommend. —Candace Hansen (Nettle)

SUPER THIEF: Self-titled: CD

Super Thief have been one of my favorite Austin bands since I first saw them in Summer 2015, but I haven't seen them live very often. They play pretty frequently, but it's usually on ■ work night for me and I'm trying to responsible in my old age. At one point I think I went ■ full year between seeing them. After that first show, they made me think of ■ post-punk Oblivians. Since then, not so much and I don't know why I thought that. Probably something in the timbre of the singers' bellow. Super Thief have always been low-end powerful, but now there's even more pound-smash-rumble. Sometimes I feel a little intimidated watching them play, but in real life they're nice guys, soft spoken and unassuming even. Don't tell anyone their secret! Best way to describe their sound now... maybe Scratch Acid-esque? This here CD is ■ collection of all their recorded output to date. Things start off with the new *Stuck* album, move into the *Dump*

Sink 12" EP, and the disc closes out with their self-titled 2015 release. It's hard for me to separate the releases in my mind since I usually listen to this whole CD at once, but if pressed, I'd say the *Stuck* songs are most likely to hammer ■ hole in your head. —Sal Lucci (superthief.bandcamp.com)

SVETLANAS:

This Is Moscow Now: LP/CD

Svetlanas recently added Nick Oliveri to its ranks ahead of recording this humorously titled album. The most notable cog in this band is vocalist Olga, whose English—featuring ■ heavy Russian accent—makes this record for me, with the rolling r's from her native language adding a spikiness to proceedings. Not only that, but somehow she also manages to convey a sense of crazy to keep things permanently on the boil when she is in charge. The musical contribution efficiently walks the line between melodic punk and metal, without really setting the speakers alight but, fortunately, Olga's performance is strong enough to carry the album. The one blot is "Speed Freak," a song in memory of Lemmy and sung by Oliveri, but totally lacking in redeeming features, just ■ outright dire song. —Rich Cocksedge (Rad Girlfriend, radgirlfriendrecords.com / Subkultura, subkultura-booking.eu)

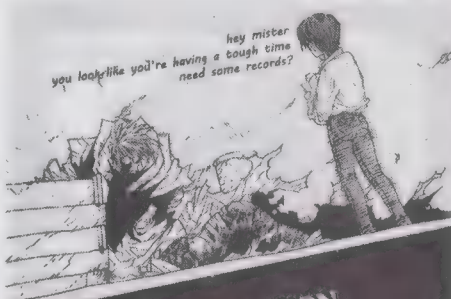
SWILL: *Fresh Air*: CD

Ten tracks of Pennywise by way of Jacksonville Beach, Fla. skate punk. What sets these guys apart from others doing something like this is the band's refusal to stick to the standard four-on-the-floor time signature usually employed in such affairs and the guitarist's use of more than the E and A strings. I also detect the vocalist has maybe dipped into the No Idea catalog ■ bit, which is just fine by me. Personally, I find the more nuanced tracks like "Incapacitate" really play to the band's strengths. I look forward to ■ what comes next for these guys. —Garrett Barnwell (Rat Town, rattownrecords.com)

TEENAGE BOTTLEROCKET:

Stealing the Covers: LP/CD

I know so many people who really love Teenage Bottlerocket, and given its musical modus operandi, I really should be part of that group of admirers. However, I ■ unable to find the same kind of adoration for the band despite a good number of individual positive elements that I have heard in its songs. It's like ■ weird assed reverse synergy where the final output is less than the ■ of its parts and I end up scratching my head trying to figure out why it doesn't work for me. I'm reaching the stage when I will give up on that particular quest for understanding. The concept of this album is for the band to cover songs of lesser-known outfits rather than go for looking to the big ■ acts for



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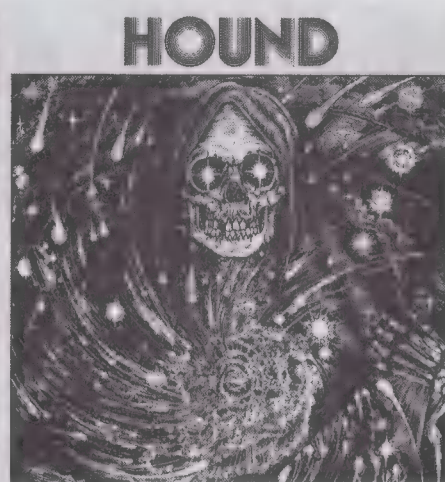
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such ■ collection of songs, which is ■ novel approach. I do like ■ song, "RoboCop Is ■ Halfbreed Sellout," originally by Sprocket Nova, ■ that's one plus point from this release! I'm sure longtime fans will lap this up. —Rich Cocksedge (Fat Wreck)

TELEPHONE LOVERS: Self-titled: LP
If there was a remake of the film *Valley Girl*, these guys would be the perfect replacement for the Plimsouls. It's all there: ■ amazing cover that screams '70s power pop, cherry red vinyl, and songs that have serious swagger. There is nothing that ■ cheesy or contrived with these guys; it's just full speed ahead rock'n'roll. For fans of the '70s CBGB's era, early L.A. power pop, and good times. —Ryan Nichols (Lolipop, lolipoprecords@yahoo.com)

THISCLOSE: Whm Glory?: 7"
Seriously, this band drives ■ crazy. Reasonably convincing d-beat stuff, well recorded, got the whole Discharge layout thing down solid. Nice guitar tone, all that—it's good. And then the vocalist, Rodney, comes in and ruins the entire thing with his craaaazy, absolutely painful Twisted Sister falsettos. It alters what is an arguably good record into an unlistenable one. I generally try not to bag ■ band for purely sonic reasons—that shit's all relative, and being in a band is hard, and putting out records costs ■ lot of money. But for the love of all that is holy,

Rodney, please consider ■ different singing style, buddy. Please. —Keith Rosson (SPHC)

TRANS ■ Gaslit: LP
Factory Records and electronica worship in the vein of the Happy Mondays, New Order, and Leftfield. Total Control and Merchandise took those influences and did something interesting with them. This is just bad. And not in the way where bad means good or where shake your booty means to wiggle one's butt. Bad as in lazily conceived, grandiose, and self-masturbatory. Still trying to figure out why there was ■ parental advisory sticker on the shrink wrap. This isn't offensive: it's vanilla as fuck. Anyone ■ go target shooting? I got ■ discuss for ya. —Juan Espinosa (Jokers Got A Posse, jokersgotaposse.com)

TROTS: Self-titled: LP
Debut from a band out of Umea, Sweden. The music's potent punk with ■ slight rock undertow, with lyrics that address both the personal and small-P political. Anger is righteous, delivery is on-point; nice work. —Jimmy Alvarado (Crush And Create)

UHRIT: Taudinkuva: 7"
Female-fronted, politically-charged d-beat/crust from Finland. Guaranteed to aggravate your downstairs neighbors, dog, and tinnitus—though probably not in that order. This quick

slab of vinyl is pretty righteous, shreds well, and would lend itself to a singalong if I knew Finnish. Maybe it's time to learn. —Cheyenne Neckmonster (Fight)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: Closer to the Grave: 15 Years of Tor Johnson Records: LP
In the review for the ten year anniversary 7", I wrote that "Tor Johnson Records has been ■ consistently great label, not only because of the great bands and releases they've put out over the years, but because of founder Paul Dechichio's unflagging dedication to his local scene and community." Bands on the label may have come and gone, but Dechichio's dedication remains unabated. This LP features newcomer and veteran label bands alike. With ten bands on this record playing ■ variety of sounds, there's sure to be something to catch the ear of a curious listener. Opening with Saint Jude's "A Mightier Disaster," followed by Tyler Daniel Bean's "Gardening & Everything Involved Therein," takes you through how wide the scope of TJR's catalogue can be in only the space of two songs. The only thing missing from this LP for me was a track from Philadelphia's Ordinary Lives, one of my favorite bands on the label in recent years. Small complaints aside, this is a great listen, and I'm looking forward to the next fifteen years of bands and shows. —Paul J. Comeau (Tor Johnson)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: I Am My Fucking Band: A Japanese M.O.T.O. Tribute: CD
Let's face it, after reading the title, you should already have ■ fairly firm grasp on whether or not you're gonna track this down and obtain it, and what ■ I gonna say to propel you otherwise? It sounds exactly like you imagine it to sound: Fifteen Japanese bands, ■ of whom you know and some of whom you don't (plus M.O.T.O. himself/themselves/itself), dredging up chewy nuggets from M.O.T.O.'s virtually infinite box of punk pop Milk Duds to your continued delight and amazement. Fans of any element of the Japanese-bands-cover-M.O.T.O. equation will not be disappointed. People who are fans of neither Japanese bands nor M.O.T.O. are really rather stupid and should hurl themselves down stairways ■ their earliest convenience. **BEST SONG AND SONG TITLE:** "Dance Dance Dance to the Radio" by the Tweepers, although "Deliver Deliver Deliver" by Boys Order is decent competition. **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** If I can believe what I read, this is the first new Tweepers recording in twenty-one years. Is it drunk yet? —Rev. Nørb (Secret Mission, secretmissionrecords.com)

VENOMOUS PINKS, THE: Do ■ Better: 7" /CDEP
If the saying "a thrill ■ minute" was ■ exact measurement, then

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this single provides fourteen and one-third thrills. Across five songs, The Venomous Pinks switch between mid-tempo melodic punk and a harder-edged, faster delivery identifying a double-edged offering, which suits it down to the ground. I find both approaches very entertaining, with crisp guitars slashing away whilst the rhythm section demands equal attention with its snappy and bouncy attribute. Hopefully, SquidHat will see fit to release an album. —Rich Cocksedge (SquidHat, info@squidhatrecords.com, squidhatrecords.com)

VIDEO ROUGE:

Total Destruction: 7"

From the vaults comes another of Richmond Records' "dead stock" reissues, this time an original press of this 45 coupled with a modern reproduction of the original cover. The title track is a bouncy bit of early ska-wave, while the flip, a cover of Love's cover of the Burt Bacharach-penned "My Little Red Book" is a darker bit of wave, with the bounce of Love's version replaced with a more insistent beat. The band itself is a bit of a mystery, but, considering the label, I'm guessing there's a Psycotic Pineapple connection in there somewhere. Thumbs up. —Jimmy Alvarado (Richmond, richmondrevisited.bigcartel.com)

WALK THE PLANK:

Cemetery Vacation: LP

Powerful hardcore from DC. With a dark, dystopian, hopeless feel, this record triumphs in presenting this feel without resorting to the clichés of the subgenre. Rare that a record gets off to a slow start with a couple of the fastest songs, but that's the case with Walk The Plank's first proper full-length. They hit their stride when they slow things down in a powerful mid-tempo stomp on the third song, "I Don't Believe." From there on out, this record destroys! —Chad Williams (Say-10, say-10.com)

WOOD CHICKENS:

Countrycide: LP

The cowpunk genre is dangerous territory for me in that I'm unfamiliar with the roots and am quite indifferent to country music entirely (from Johnny Cash to Merle Haggard to Garth Brooks: not fucking sorry). Wood Chickens are definitely doing the cowpunk thing—right down to the cow skull on the cover—but songs like "Angie Hosh," "Hex on Me," and "Dyin' on the Vine" are straight-up hardcore punk not unlike *Everything Falls Apart*-era Hüskers. "Flesh 'N' Blood" is a very Minutemen-esque song that also rules pretty hard. I was almost ready to dismiss this as forgettable alt-country (the Refreshments, et cetera) or even as Flogging Molly without the fiddles and accordion, but I'm really glad

I gave this a closer look because there's so many more layers to this record than just that. Winner, winner, chicken dinner! —Juan Espinosa (Big Neck, woodchickens.bandcamp.com / bigneckrecords.com)

WYDLIFE: *The Time Has*

Come to Rock & Roll: 12"

Any glam punk-influenced power pop gets an instant eye roll when "Rock & Roll" is anywhere on the cover or mentioned enough in the lyrics to create some kind of drinking game involving cheap beer and key bumps. But that's what they're going for. There are nice moments when they roll into the tougher punk rock, screaming end of the spectrum. But as soon as the Cheap Trick dual leads kick in with the 4/4 drum beats and predictable rhymes about jerking off, I get depressed and want to get wasted as the potential in their obvious musical ability. The derogatory song title, "Cowboys and Slutz," raises my eyebrow, and even with promising aggressive hooks, the lyrical content is little more than a rip-off of Social Distortion's *Mommy's Little Monster* without the low bar of nuance in Mike Ness' lyrics. I appreciate the pretty green vinyl. —Sal Go (radi.al / WyldlifeONYB)

RAY CAT TRIO: *I Lied: 7"*

Between the band and the Rat Fink-influenced cover art, I think it is safe to assume that we are in garage

punk territory with this single. It turns out to be exactly the case once the needle is dropped. There is a mix of all things trash here, a little surf, a heaping helping of garage, and a little rockabilly. This would have been right at home on either Estrus Records or Crypt about twenty-five years ago. If you are a fan of trashy garage punk, this is solid. —Mike Frame (Killjoy, killjoy-records.de)

ZERODENT:

Soul Mender: 7"

Where the hell did these fellas come from? Australia, that's where. To me, some bands just don't need subgenres and flashy categories to describe what they do. They just play punk rock in the truest way—no smoke, no mirrors. Bands like Radioactivity, The Saints, The Ramones have done this well. Zerodent are not any of those bands, they're their own thing, and I dig it. —Ryan Nichols (Almost Ready, almostreadyrecords@live.com)

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to bands and labels that were reviewed either in this issue
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- **12XU**, 3005 South Lamar, D109-403, Austin, TX 78704
- **540**, 2209 South 1st St., Austin, TX 78704
- **625 Thrashcore**, PO Box 591, Middlebury, VT 05753
- **AK-47**, PO Box 5447 Stn. B, Victoria, BC, V8R 6S4, Canada
- **Almost Ready**, 135 Huntington St., Brooklyn, NY 11231
- **Beast**, 7 rue de la Motte Fablet, 35000, Rennes, Bzh, France
- **Beer City**, PO Box 1759, Milwaukee, WI 53201-1759
- **Big Neck**, 39877 Thomas Mill Rd., Leesburg, VA 20175
- **Boss Tuneage**, PO Box 74, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2WB, United Kingdom
- **Bummertown**, PO Box 273, Moncton, AB, E7C 8K9, Canada
- **Cat Dead Details Later**, 1 Kane St., Portsmouth, NH 03801
- **Collision Course**, PO Box 265, Hermosa Beach, CA 90254
- **Concrete Jungle**, Allersberger Str. 185 L1a, 90461 Nürnberg, Germany
- **Crush And Create**, c/o Sabina Husberg Gotlind, Spanehusvagen 53, 214 39 Malmö, Sweden

- **Damaged Goods**, PO Box 45854, London, E11 1YX, Great Britain
- **Dead Broke**, 139 Huber Ave., Holbrook, NY 11741
- **Deathwish Inc.**, 59 Park St., 2nd Floor, Beverly, MA 01915
- **Don Giovanni**, PO Box 628, Kingston, NJ 08528
- **Dusty Medical**, PO Box 1981, Milwaukee, WI 53201
- **E.D.S.**, 10 Westwood Dr., Bayville, NJ 08721
- **Emily**, 5915 71st Ave., Apt 2L, Ridgewood, NY 11385
- **Fat Wreck Chords**, 2196 Palou Ave., SF, CA 94124
- **Feral Kid**, 27 Ripley Pl., Buffalo, NY 14213
- **Fight**, Hikivuorenkatu 17 D 36, 33710 Tampere, Finland
- **Gilgongo**, PO Box 7455, Tempe, AZ 85281
- **Hostage**, PO Box 5401, Huntington Beach, CA 92646
- **Hound Gawd**, Kardinal-Galen-Straße 32, 47051 Duisburg, Deutschland
- **Jagjaguwar**, 213 S. Rogers St., Bloomington, IN 47404
- **Killjoy**, Postfach 301141, Leipzig, Germany
- **Lollipop**, 2826 E. 1st St., LA, CA 90033
- **Lord Cash Pockets**, PO Box 3696, Manhattan Beach, CA 90266

- **More Power**, PO Box 467, Buffalo, NY 14226
- **Morning Wood**, Draversdyk 10, 8641 WT Rien, The Netherlands
- **Narmer**, 202 Old Gradyville Rd., Glen Mills, PA 19342
- **Neck Chop**, PO Box 5635, Fullerton, CA 92838
- **No Front Teeth**, PO Box 27070, London, N2 9ZP, United Kingdom
- **Not Like You**, 102 Richmond Dr., SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106
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- **Red Scare**, 4625 Hazel Ave., Apt. 1F, Philadelphia, PA 19143
- **Rerun**, PO Box 22472, St. Louis, MO 63126-0472

- **Rockstar**, Viktoriastr. 51, 52066 Aachen, Germany
- **Schizophrenic**, 17 W 4th St., Hamilton, ON, L9C 3M2, Canada
- **Sorry State**, 317 W. Morgan St. Ste., 105, Raleigh, NC 27601
- **SPHC** c/o Dan McGregor, 8397 Piping Rock Ct., Millersville, MD 21108
- **Squid Hat**, 848 N. Rainbow Blvd. #889, Las Vegas, NV 89107
- **Strange Music, Inc.**, PO Box 1114, Blue Springs, MO 64013
- **TKO**, 21405 Brookhurst St., Huntington Beach, CA 92646
- **To Live A Lie**, c/o Will Butler, 2825 Van Dyke Ave., Raleigh, NC 27607-7021
- **Tor Johnson**, PO Box 1556, Providence, RI 02901-1556
- **Une Vie Pour Rien**, BP 30 904, 44 009 Nantes, Cedex 1, France
- **Verbal Burlesque**, PO Box 1053, Twisp, WA 98856
- **Voodoo Rhythm**, Wankdorfheld Strasse 92, 3014 Bern, Switzerland

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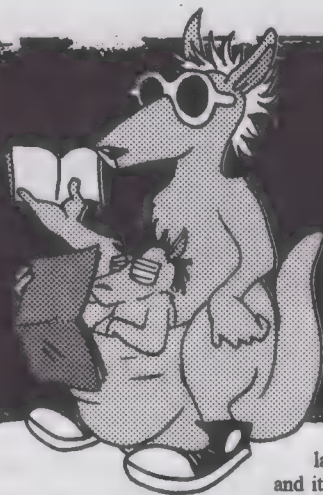
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INK! TAKEOVER, THE #80,

\$5.99, 8 1/2" x 11", glossy, 144 pgs.

I have always had a soft spot for *The Big Takeover*. Named after an excellent Bad Brains song, it has been around for well over thirty years. In the 1990s, when I was a teen, I would go to Barnes & Noble or Borders (RIP) and read *Maximum Rock'n'Roll*, *AP*, and *The Big Takeover*, amongst others. Away from a metropolis, it was the only place I could read these publications and find out about music. This issue includes interviews with Chrissie Hynde, Tommy Stinson, Tobin Sprout, Grandaddy, as well as a ton of reviews. I appreciated Jack Rabid's editorial about America's political situation and the abomination that is Donald Trump. The Chrissie Hynde interview by Rabid was especially enjoyable, as he had an actual conversation with her that covered music's good ground of the singer who has put out music for decades. Otherwise, I can't say this issue rocked my world, but it was a good trip down memory lane. —Kurt Morris (The Big Takeover, 1713 8th Ave., Suite 3-2, Box 2, Brooklyn, NY 11215)

CELEBRATED SUMMER #1, \$5, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", color, copied, 41 pgs.

This is a really cool way to celebrate a milestone. Celebrated Summer Records in Baltimore is ten years old, so Tony decided to make a zine to tell the story of the shop. Along with the story with its often intense ups and downs, the zine is chock full of photos of the store, its beginnings, where it's at now, bands playing there, staff and friends, and the many shirt, poster, and button designs over the years. It has a beautiful layout and features cover art from *Razorcake*'s own Liz Prince. Reading this made me want to go to Baltimore and hang out at the shop! —Ty Stranglehold (Celebrated Summer, 3116 Falls Rd., Baltimore, MD 21211)

CHRISTIAN HUMPER, THE #54, Free, 3 3/4" x 6", printed, 20 pgs.

It's been a long time since Adam Voith has published a copy of his zine, *The Christian Humper*, although he's been putting it out since 1991. I'm so glad he's back at it. This issue is a great fictional piece about Adam's neighbor. After many years of living nearby but never meeting, Adam finally does so, and gets to know the neighbor's big old tour bus. The rest of the zine finds Adam switching back and forth between the actual encounter and the personality he has created in his mind of this neighbor. In Adam's mind, this old man used to be the driver for Christian musicians, including Michael W. Smith. Adam's imaginary tales of this man's life are hilarious. They brought plenty of smiles to my face. I recalled Christian musicians from my childhood and experiences in youth group. As someone who wrote "One Punk's Guide to Christian Punk" for *Razorcake*, it shouldn't be a surprise I got a kick out of this. However, I think those who have an even peripheral interest in Christian music culture or who grew up in a church youth group will find this zine to be appealing. In addition, Adam is a great writer whose prose is smooth and enjoyable to read. And it's free, so there's really no reason not to get this issue of *The Christian Humper*. —Kurt Morris (Adam Voith, 6559 Brownlee Dr., Nashville, TN 37205, adamvoith@me.com)

DEEP FRIED ZINE MPLS, \$1, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", copied, 16 pgs.

Okay, first of all, fast food is unhealthy and terrible for your body and mind. No! Second, zines giving free advertising to terrible fast food companies... also a big no-no. No! There. Now that we got that out of the way, I'm going to say, for the discerning reader there's quite a bit of fun to be had in this goofy, fast food-celebrating zine. In this zine, you'll learn more than you ever need to know about Taco Bell's Choco Taco and Jack In The Box's '93 E. Coli epidemic. They have Mountain Dew spin-offs like Pitch Black and White Out as metaphor for deconstructing the politics of the Trump Administration. They also have a bone to pick with new school fast food and its urge to abbreviate everything, like DQ, a la. *Deep Fried* has ideas, man. Following in the tradition of the Ramones and Sloppy Seconds, *Deep Fried* reminds us of the trash culture-glorifying roots of punk rock. Somehow, with brains foggy from corn syrup, MSG, and

lack of nutrition, they put together this zine as an outlet for those vices and it's a good time. But you didn't hear it from me. —Craven Rock (Deep Fried Zine MPLS, 2901 Yosemite Avenue South, St. Louis Park, MN 55426, videophobia222@hotmail.com)

DMB STUDIOS, \$2, 3" x 4", copied, 6 pgs.

In this batch of zines to review this month, I received a bundle of mini-comics from "DMB Studios," a seemingly prolific cartoonist, as there were six zines in total. Each mini-comic contained six pages of a preview of one of his particular comics. Ranging from schoolgirls in a land of monster-movie middle school (there was a vampire girl, a ghost girl, and more of the like), to a superhero team of fashionistas, and even an autobiographical mini-comic. While the genres of the author's minis ranged, they didn't really grab my interest. Quantity over quality in terms of storylines and plots. I believe the cartoonist would do well with teaming up with a writer so they could focus solely on their art. To check out their many characters and comics, you can read them all for free on the website. —Tricia Ramos (DMB Studios, dmbstudios.blogspot.com)

EARTH FIRST! SUMMER 2017, \$6.50, 8" x 10 1/2", 72 pgs.

Earth First! is a journal of ecological resistance. What was new this summer? First off, I want to say that we have no word from incarcerated presidential candidate Sean Swain, who is sort of the life of the *Earth First!* party. In the new issue, I used his column to concede Trump's win against his own campaign to end "swivilization," but I'm sure Swain would have plenty to say about the first one hundred days. He's not in this issue, so I hope he's doing well. Anyhow, this magazine is growing on me. I'm always learning some crazy history when I take the time to sit down with it. I learned about the other side of the story to Somali pirates, who started out as a ragtag defense against illegal dumping and fishing in their waters, and I read about one of the world's largest arms fairs, too. It's the Defence and Security Equipment International (notice British spelling), which happens in London, where, ironically, you can't even own a gun. The Robocopish organization sells "drones, planes, weapons," and military vehicles. Yikes. As the author puts it, "brutality and war starts at DSEI, where deals are made," so maybe a protest at the source will hurt less folks hurt in dramatic protests later on. What else is happening in England? Fox hunts. Men in red suits ride horses and follow hounds that chase foxes to kill them. The Hunt Saboteurs Association has long objected to this practice and has had a history of throwing the dogs off the chase by tossing them delicious hunks of meat—a good day for dogs, a bad day for men! This and other stories await you. —Jim Joyce (Daily Planet Publishing, *Earth First! Journal*, PO Box 964, Lake Worth, FL 33460)

FUTURE ANTHROPOLOGY, \$5, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", 16 pgs.

Jean-Paul L. Garnier's *Future Anthropology* is a poetry chapbook in a post-apocalyptic wasteland, or at least that's the vibe I was picking up. The speakers in these poems bemoan the loss of humanity and of good growin' dirt, too, seeing as "the soil / Which barely can now give us barley" is all that's left, and the "demons of soul of man procure / With bodies dripping protoplasm" have a "Disease for which there is no cure." All in all, it's a rough scene. This might be your thing if you're a fan of Ray "Red Planet Bandit" Bradbury, but if not, I'll try to sell it to you on the cover art alone, as it features a painting of a cowboy whipping a couple of anthropologist robots as they sort through shallow dig site. Yippee-ki-yay, future babies! —Jim Joyce (spacecowboybooks.com)

GUIDE TO BEING BROKE AND FABULOUS,

\$8, 5 1/4" x 7 1/2", copied, 36 pgs.

Julia Arredondo takes on the role of a brash and empowering older sister in this handy (and very cute looking) guide. The "Fabulous" in the title is crucial—the zine focuses less on the gritty, not-fun details (there are a couple simple recipes and some general thoughts about roommates vs. roommates) than on the

questions of cheap date activities and how to develop a rad and confident style ■ tight budget. Someone needing practical information about survival, especially someone without any family support system whatsoever, will likely be better served by other resources. That person is probably not buying ■ eight-dollar zine anyway. That's not to say that there isn't some really thoughtful and valuable stuff in here, especially the sections on maintaining supportive friendships and dealing with stress. Overall, it's a self-care/self-help zine oriented toward young people in urban ■ who don't have a lot of money. I could ■ this being ■ pretty cool resource for a lot of teenagers in general, just for the author's tough, positive attitude. —Indiana Laub (Vice Versa Press, viceversapress.com)

KING-CAT COMICS AND STORIES #77, \$5, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", copied, 40 pgs. John Porcellino has been writing, illustrating, and self-publishing *King-Cat Comics* since 1989. Through ■ series of autobiographical vignettes, issue 77 explores his relationship with animals: ■ possum plays dead in his backyard, a yellow-jacket stings his crotch, and he spots ■ big cat while on the road on two separate occasions. Porcellino's minimal black-and-white illustrations capture his childlike awe during every animal encounter. For example, he and his sister watch, mouths agape, as their pet caterpillar becomes ■ butterfly. When ■ cougar strolls alongside the road, his wide-eyed expression—comprised of ■ few simple shapes and lines—says ■ much with so little. There's profound narrative power in stripping things down to their essential elements. And so, these thoughtful

the interview with Dean from Blue Tile Lounge in Vegas. He talks about putting on the Skate Rock Reunion back in 2014 (which to this day is the best show I have ever been to!) and the Stern brothers attempting to heavy him (shocking) for having the show on the same weekend as Punk Rock Bowling. All in all, I always look forward to reading this, and it is settling to know that there are other people just like ■ out there! —Ty Stranglehold (Not Like You Zine, 102 Richmond Ave. SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106)

PUNK ROCK PHOTO ZINE, \$?, 3" x 4", copied, 6 pgs. A handful of photos from live punk shows is what's included in this photography zine. The lighting and shot choices are really well done. In particular, one shot of The Misfits has shadows and highlights cast in all the right places to make one great photo. The author and photographer has an Instagram as well, if you would like to check out more of their art. —Tricia Ramos (Punk Rock Photo Zine, @bisstek, beesone71@gmail.com)

SCENE & HERD #8, copied, 3" x 4", 6 pgs. A small motivational comic, it starts off with questions of self-worth and mental health and ends by helping the reader by reminding them that they ■ capable and ■ make it through (whatever issue you're dealing with). A nice, small reminder that we ■ not alone in the darkness and that there is hope out there. —Tricia Ramos (Scene & Herd, brantzwoolsey.tumblr.com)

Following in the tradition of the Ramones and Sloppy Seconds, *Deep Fried* reminds us of the trash culture-glorifying roots of punk rock.

and serene moments epitomize the brilliance of *King-Cat Comics*; every experience—no matter how mundane—is valuable, meaningful, and worthy of documentation. After reading *King-Cat Comics* for the first time, I wanted to make my own minicomic, and that's ■ of the greatest compliments you can give any creator: seeing what you do makes ■ want to do that, too. —Sean Arenas (Spit And A Half, PO Box 142, So. Beloit, IL 61080, spitandahalf.com)

LGBTQ+ VOICES, \$5, 4" ■ 5 1/2", copied, 12 pgs. A small chapbook of LGBTQ+ poems from Space Cowboy Books, a small outfit from Joshua Tree, Calif. This poetry collection was released for Stonewall Remembrance Days, ■ four-day-long art, poetry, and music festival in honor of the Stonewall Riots in New York. Each of the nine poems explores a different topic, though there is ample queer history, love, and nature. —Cheyenne Neckmonster (61871 29 Palms Highway, Joshua Tree, CA 92252)

MAXIMUM ROCK'N'ROLL #409, \$4.99, 8 1/2" x 11", copied, 111 pgs. Is there ■ West Coast punk whose life remains untouched by *MRR*? Well, there probably ■ ■ these days; the chain bookstore in which my high school punk crew would sit and read through entire issues isn't even in business anymore. But anyway, it's *MRR*; you pretty much know what you're gonna get. This issue is actually pretty stacked, at least as far as my personal interests go. Several fest features, including an interview about Break Free, a POC punk fest in Philadelphia that looks fucking awesome, as well as photo spreads of Oklahoma City's Everything Is Not OK and D.C.'s Damaged City Fest. There's also a rad—and dangerously daydream-inducing—oral history of Thrillhouse Records, which recently celebrated its unlikely ten-year anniversary. Also ■ cool columns, including one about the radical potential of Latin language education. Part of ■ wants to review their review of the last *Razorcake* in hopes that ■ will review my review of that review in the next issue, but it's never gonna happen. —Indiana Laub (Maximum Rock'n'roll, PO Box 460760, SF, CA 94146-0760)

NOT LIKE YOU #7, ■ 1/2" ■ 11", copied, 38 pgs. Killer! Another issue of *Not Like You*. As I've said in the past, this zine encapsulates the things I love most in life, namely punk rock and skateboarding. This issue features a lot of the same: interviews with skaters and bands, record reviews, random anecdotes, and lots of great photos. The highlight for me was

SLINGSHOT #124, \$1, 8 1/2" x 11", newsprint, 12 pgs. Always ■ breath of fresh air in a polluted and toxic world, *Slingshot* brings it with ■ super topical issue. An article called "Less Resist, More Exist" challenges "The Resistance" to strive for more than simply fighting the administration and fascists in the streets, encouraging focus on building the communities that we're actually fighting for. The Right has been organizing ■ "division and polarization," so Jesse D.'s article insists we "stop playing into this game by unwittingly escalating false divisions, and try to focus on unity, listening, healing, and solidarity.... If solidarity has any meaning... it doesn't just mean solidarity with a tiny politically air-tight clique eager to give the middle finger to everyone who hasn't learned our code language." A perfect companion article, "I Was a Fascist," has a former Nazi explain the valid alienation, anger, and oppression he felt and how it was manipulated by racist peckerwoods, leading him down a dark and ignorant path. He has suggestions for how the Left can reach people before being indoctrinated by human turds like Tom Metzger. The issue rounds out with stuff on fighting the Black Snake of oil and practicing communalism. *Slingshot* represents the way revolutionaries should be but rarely are. It avoids the lofty academic style of mags like *Fifth Estate*, and welcomes voices who have something to say, regardless of their skill and experience writing. Their layout is always cut and paste with crude illustration, giving off ■ charming and warm feel. —Craven Rock (Slingshot, PO Box 3051, Berkeley, CA 94703, slingshot@tao.ca)

SLINGSHOT #124, free, 8 1/2" ■ 11", newsprint, 12 pgs. I never knew that the *Slingshot* pocket organizer people had ■ publication, but they do, and it's a foldout newsprint reader with thoughtful lefty content and a few practical resources, like news ■ what info shops have opened or closed since that last planner got printed. The ■ issue had ■ couple jargony reads like "Active Autonomous," a manifesto-ish call for "a new world view," that I was too much of a lumpen to process. I can tell you that it involved ■. My favorite two reads were Jane's article about rape culture ("Disturbance in a Safe Space") and Michael Frank's piece about discovering that the white power movement and enlistment in the armed forces were not for him ("I Was ■ Fascist"). From Jane's piece, I learned some sad but enlightening statistics about survivors of sexual violence and how a lot of people, rather than supporting victims, ignore or shame them. It's not ■ purely depressing read—the author ties in ■ personal anecdote about (a) teaching folks ways of being more receptive to victims and (b) how-to guide for those who don't know how to help. As it is,

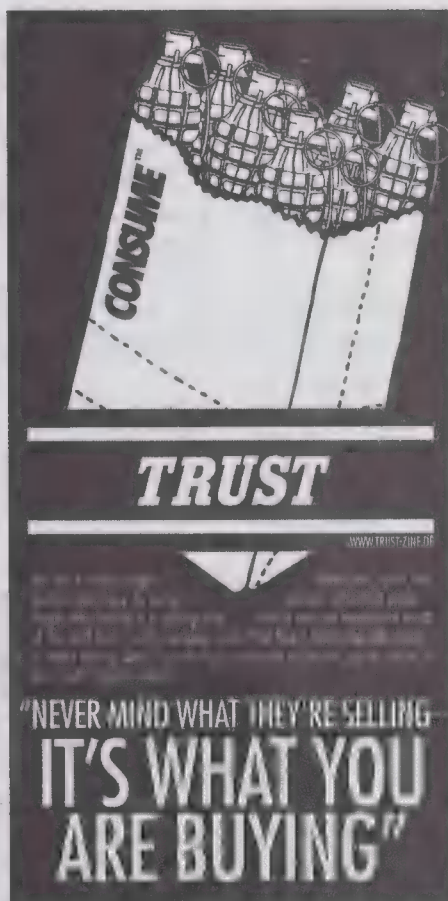


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"communities ■■■ full of people," she writes, "not robots," and you have to meet people where they are and educate accordingly. Frank's piece has ■ pretty cool sense of compassion, too, in that he recalls what factors cultivated his racism—being bullied, needing ■■■■■ to bully in turn—and how that ■■■ him to join the army and eventually discover that he was ■ late-blooming anarchist with a whole lot of love and readiness to leave the armed forces and get activist. Enlightening reading, and free! —Jim Joyce (Slingshot Collective, PO Box 3051, Berkeley, CA 94703)

SOMETHING FOR NOTHING #74,

2 stamps or trade, 5½" ■ 8½", copied, 40 pgs.

This fanzine/perzine of sorts always features a thorough section on a band or genre of music. This issue is focused on the band and discography of The Violent Femmes. Starting off with ■ short piece ■■ how they are ■■■ of the author's top five favorite bands, the zine then goes over every album they've ever put out, including live DVDs. The latter half of the zine is why I say it's also a perzine, as the author has a birthday recap spread (covering what they did for their birthday), ■ spread on beverages they've recently tried and reviewed, and restaurants in their ■■■ that they've eaten at and suggest the reader tries as well. If you're looking for a dense read, this is definitely one to sit down with. —Tricia Ramos (Something For Nothing, PO Box 226, Massillon, OH 44648)

i.e., cops, business owners, and city council eventually acting in tandem to get what they viewed as ■■ unwelcome element out of their suburban enclave. That might even be true. Yet if ■■■ half of ■■■ public statements here are correct, punks at ■■■ Cuckoo's Nest got their venue shut down mainly because they were shitheads. Cultural attitudes shift, I get that, but anyone who has ever helped sustain ■ venue knows: Don't shit where you eat. For all of the ■■■ suppression that went on, there also seemed like ■ shit-ton of really young kids who were lighting ■■■ ■■ fire, breaking neighboring windows, kicking each other's asses, getting drunk, and doing coke in the parking lot. I'm torn, which makes for a seriously fascinating read. —Keith Rosson (Suburban Struggle Zine, 3603 W. Washington Blvd., LA, CA 90018)

THESE BARS: AN ANTHOLOGY, \$?, 8½" x 11", printed, 57 pgs.

This anthology of poetry and art comes from students who attend College Bridge Academy Watts. Now on its sixth year, the collection features poetry, narratives, and art, all from students who in some way or another have experienced assault, racial profiling, have been in the foster care system, or have experienced gang violence or drug addiction in their community. The poems were touching and heartbreaking in some, uplifting through struggle and oppression in others, and all spoke through ■ voice much older than their years. I truly enjoyed reading through all

There's profound narrative power in stripping things down to their essential elements. And so, these thoughtful and serene moments epitomize the brilliance of *King-Cat Comics*.

Dean Adams | KING-CAT COMICS AND STORIES

SUBDUDE #1 ■ #2, \$3, trade or \$5 for both, 4¼" ■ 5½", copied, 24 and 36 pgs.

The author of this zine considers his general mental ■■■ to be subdued. His zine title comes from an unintentional homophone that happened ■■ a result of his dyslexia. It's a perfect title, accurately describing the writer ■■■ the tone of his zine: thoughtful, reflective, with ■ bit of melancholy, yet never navel-gazing to the point of alienating the reader. Issue #1 deals with the wishy-washiness of people when you ask them to do something ■■■ the, "Oh yeah, let's ■■■ up sometime" thing people will say and not really mean. I know when people say this they ■■■ often being polite, but aren't really committal. The author makes ■ good case that it often has to do with the modern world and the constant bombardment of choices. He thinks people don't *really* commit because it might be the less fun choice. We want to keep ■■■ options open as long as ■■■ can. He encourages more honesty in commitments and more ■■■■■■■ in sticking to the ones you made. Issue #2 is about how his grandmother got him a knockoff, cheapo, imitation Masters of the Universe toy, how it was always out of place and he never knew what to do with it. He then ■■■ it as a metaphor for himself, how being gay made him feel like an outsider ■■ ■ kid. There's also stuff on getting over not-knowing-how/asking-for-help-shame to learn simple bike fixes. There's some book and music lists to pad things out. Both these zines ■■■ short and I think they would work better combined into a single issue, allowing the reader a fuller look at who Mick is. Just ■■ aesthetic preference, not ■ critique. Get both of them! —Craven Rock (Mick, 1901 E Sunset Dr., Bellingham, WA 98226, subdudezine@gmail.com)

SUBURBAN STRUGGLE: THE CAMPAIGN TO SUPPRESS PUNK IN COSTA MESA, CALIFORNIA, 1978-1981, \$6, 5½" x 8½", copied, 132 pgs.

One of the most interesting things I've ever gotten to review. A history of ■■ early Orange County venue, Costa Mesa's the Cuckoo's Nest, as told entirely through police reports and public documents. Divided into chronological order, with an absolutely stunning cut and paste aesthetic, *Suburban Struggle* is a fascinating look at how punk was viewed by the "normal" populace. It reads as a pretty classic case of ■ venue's demise: shows get put on, punks show up, have issues with the neighbors, concerns of property values and "children's safety" arises, venue shuts down. Like I said, it's all told through public records, though the editor does ■ fantastic job of parsing through them and providing ■ summation of each chapter. While ■■■ of the pages suffer from a little too much photocopy manipulation that makes them difficult to decipher, the vast majority of it is a visual wonder. It's beautiful. It also placed me in a strange position: the editor posits that the Cuckoo's Nest ■■■ essentially shut down via "state suppression,"

their poems. Art can be a very important part of healing and I hope that this program continues on for many years. —Tricia Ramos (These Bars: An Anthology, bridgetarlene@gmail.com)

TRUST #183, 8" x 10½", offset, 65 pgs.

Where do I begin with the almighty *Trust* fanzine? *Trust* is often described ■ the German equivalent of *Maximum Rocknroll*, and with good reason. Their mission and content are often aligned, both being staunch supporters of DIY hardcore, punk, and underground culture in general. This issue includes the normal collection of columns, record and zine reviews, and photo spreads alongside featured articles/interviews with former Lookout! Records head honcho Larry Livermore, Reagan Youth, Sunbather, Feels, and much ■■■. *Trust* is such an important fanzine, evident in that it has been able to exist uninterrupted for thirty-plus years now, with hopefully another thirty-plus in the works. —Mark Twistworthy (Trust, Verlag, Postfach 11 07 62, 28087 Bremen, Germany)

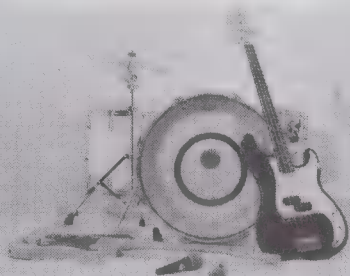
XEROGRAPHY DEBT #41, \$4, 5½" ■ 8½", printed, 75 pgs.

It's been years since I've read *Xerography Debt*, but when I found myself entrenched in the zine scene, I enjoyed it greatly. "A zine that reviews other zines—how cool!" I thought to myself all those years ago. I scoured the pages for issues written by friends. I also appreciated *Xerography Debt's* generally optimistic reviews, which, even if not one hundred percent positive, were never brutal and tried to be uplifting in their criticism. It seems as though this issue is much different than the ones I read years ago and not for the better. *Xerography Debt* bills itself as "The review zine with perzine tendencies," and that's clear in that there are columns ■ the front of the issue followed by over 150 zine reviews. I couldn't really get into the perzine tendencies, although I did appreciate Jeff Somers' column on making it as a freelance writer. None of the others struck me ■■ noteworthy reading. I ■■■ also disappointed that a number of ■■■ writers submitted reviews for the same zines. If I'm not already a fan of a zine, reading about it a second, third, fourth, or even fifth time isn't going to do much for me. I do have to give props on ■ few things, though. It was great to ■■ contributors in Spain, Germany, Japan, Australia, and Turkey. That meant there were also some foreign language zines reviewed, reminding the reader of their importance all over the globe. Also, the reviewer of issue #95 of *Razorcake* liked my article about Christian punk and, in the service of self-interest, isn't that all that really matters? —Kurt Morris (Davida Gypsy Breier, PO Box 347, Glen Arm, MD 21057)





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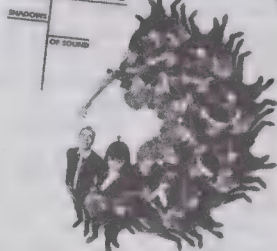
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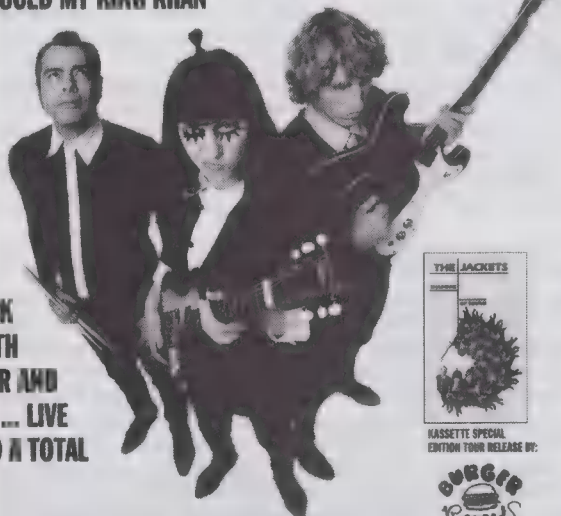
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Fear of ■ Nørb Planet:
The Complete Maximum Rocknroll Columns 1994-1998
 By Rev. Nørb, 288 pgs.

I subscribed to *Maximum Rocknroll* in December. Before that, my tenure ■ ■ reader of the venerated mag coincided roughly with Nørb's term as columnist—I started reading faithfully around 1993 and dropped out in 1998 ■ 1999—when I became smitten with Louisville post-rock and Ebullition emo. It's wild to read these

Rather than expurgating his un-P.C. passages, he leaves them in here for better or worse.

With that said, "LOL" is so overused it doesn't mean anything any more. But ■ I reread these columns, I found myself laughing out loud. A lot. So much so, in fact, that beginning on page fourteen, I made ■ mark above each column that had me genuinely laughing (no chuckles, no snorts—this is the *laugh tally*, you understand). Between pages fourteen and 288, I laughed out loud thirty-nine times. *Thirty-nine times!* (Page 250 got ■ three times and page thirty twice, for the record.) I can't remember ■ record or comedy special that's made me laugh as much. I mention this to emphasize the fact that the good Reverend doesn't have ■ mean bone in his body. Dude's ■ comedian, mining the dissonance between the freedom and rules of the punk ■■■■ for all their absurdity.

Nørb's previous book *The Annotated Boris* alleges to be ■ book of gags about Boris the Sprinkler's lyrics, but is actually one of the funniest and saddest books about being in ■ band I've ever read. Similarly, *Fear of a Nørb Planet* alleges to be a collection of columns, but is in fact ■ time capsule to heady scene years (I'd forgotten all about Nick Fitt and his *MRR* column). It's one of the greatest comedy works of our time—and everyone knows the best comedy is based in the humdrum, the mundane. Nørb spins the everyday into gold. A triumph. —Michael T. Fournier (\$14.98 to Bulge, bulge.biz)

Fetch: How ■ Bad Dog Brought Me Home
 By Nicole J. Georges, 314 pgs.

To be honest, I've never had ■ dog. People are often shocked when I say that, as if dog ownership is a universal experience. Now, I've had several cats. (This is when dog owners typically roll their eyes.) But I ■ still relate to Nicole J. Georges' hair-pulling experiences with Beija, a troubled shar-pei/corgi mix she rescued when she was sixteen years old. She struggles to integrate the fearful dog into her

One of the greatest comedy works of our time—and everyone knows the best comedy is based in the humdrum, the mundane. Nørb spins the everyday into gold. A triumph.

—Michael T. Fournier | *Fear of a Nørb Planet: The Complete Maximum Rocknroll Columns 1994-1998*

columns again after more than twenty years. I have memories specific to loads of them: the exact chair in the Elvis Room where I ■ after buying the new issue, diving directly into Nørb's column to see what ridiculous tangent would be the through line around which he'd base that month's particular rantings (still a habit with this mag—sorry, Dale).

The contentious stuff first: Part of Nørb's thing has always been pushing boundaries. Anyone familiar with his deeply parenthetical style already knows this. In the height of the mid-'90s furor regarding Tim Yohannon's strict guidelines on what was/wasn't punk (and the subsequent aftershocks, which yielded the formation of *Punk Planet*, *HeartattaCk* and *Hit List* zines to cover music falling outside of Tim's umbrella), Nørb ■ the hyper-caFFEinated burr under the punk establishment saddle, throwing around references that are by no stretch of the imagination politically correct. Prior to this tome's arrival, I wondered how Nørb would deal with these topics. Go figure—he apologizes in the intro, saying he took things too far.

life while she grapples with the trials and tribulations of growing up. Although Georges' illustrations ■ effervescent and her words ■ scalpel sharp, the narrative feels overly familiar.

Many comics readers grumble about the glut of superhero stories published every year; however, the same can now be said about graphic memoirs. On my shelf, I spot Art Spiegelman, Alison Bechdel, Marzena Sowa, Adrian Tomine, David B., Marjane Satrapi, and Yoshihiro Tatsumi, to ■ few. This isn't to devalue the work or the experiences of these talented writers and artists, but to acknowledge why *Fetch* did not resonate with me. I'm honestly burned out ■ the banal nature of the genre and the tropes of human-animal relationship stories: person attempts to change animal; animal changes person instead.

Ultimately, with Georges' *Fetch*, the narrative moves at ■ sluggish pace, for she quickly sidesteps more gripping topics (her relationship with her parents, for example), and instead focuses on the minutiae (and clichés) of dog ownership. *Fetch*, however, does offer ■ gateway

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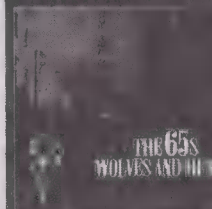
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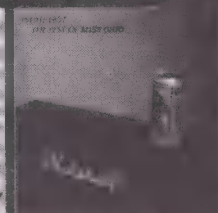
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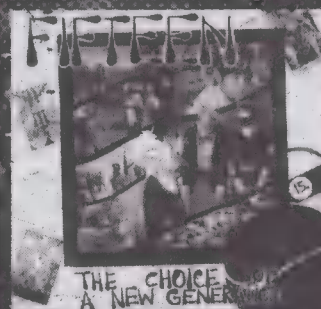
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for readers unfamiliar with the medium: the dog lover looking for a new read, the parent who naively believes comics are all spandex and uppercuts, the jaded punk searching for fair representation. In that sense, *Fetch* serves to bridge the divide between mainstream literature and comics. But for those of us who frequently traverse said bridge, Georges' graphic memoir is uninspired. —Sean Arenas (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt)

Henry & Glenn Adult Activity & Coloring Book

By Tom Neely & Others, 112 pgs.

Here we have the newest continuation of the ongoing Henry and Glenn saga, which speculates on a universe where Henry Rollins and Glenn Danzig are mature enough in their masculinity to realize their feelings for one another and enter a homosexual relationship. The

scene was what it was. Still, it would've been nice to hear about race or gender issues in the scene. How was it to be a woman at a venue that specialized in macho, aggressive music? Additionally, there were blacks and Asians in photos but very little talk about race. What were their experiences like?

Another concern is that while the title of the book states it covers the years 1988-1998, there is very little mentioned about the club after the early '90s. This was especially disappointing, as I got into hardcore about '95 and would've loved to hear about the bands from that time.

While this is a very well-packaged book with cool photos, it fails to fully capture the history of The Safari Club, a venue that, while very interesting, is just like a lot of others that once existed. Many of us had them in our cities, but I wanted to know what made this one

McClanahan isn't nihilistic. He spent many hours staring into this abyss so we only have to spend a few hours. Our old hope is burnt off like sugar cane and new hope is (if all goes well) harvested.

—Jim Woster | *The Sarah Book*

joke has been taken to some extremes before, and now you can take it home as a series of oversized, uncolored gag panels you can color in yourself. The art is split between the original author and guest artists providing a page or three. I guess I'm not surprised a joke like *Henry & Glenn* has sustained. If you were a fan of the joke the first time, the gags in this book are pretty good but nothing you haven't seen already. It's more *Henry & Glenn*, you know? I can't imagine anyone would be convinced on the "franchise" if this was their first purchase, though. —Bryan Static (Microcosm, 2752 N Williams Ave, Portland, OR 97227, microcosmpublishing.com)

Live at The Safari Club:

A History of hardCORE Punk in the Nation's Capital 1988-1998

By Shawna Kenney and Rich Dolinger, 123 pgs.

The past few years there have been more than a fair share of books about the music scene in Washington D.C. *Live at The Safari Club* is a bit different. This coffee table-style book covers the scene at The Safari Club in the late 1980s through the '90s. The authors, Shawna Kenney and Rich Dolinger, were part of the scene, with Kenney being a primary booker at the venue when she was only eighteen.

The book follows an oral history outline, with individuals sharing their experiences. Some of the names were familiar to me: Alec MacKaye (Ignition, Faith), Tim Owen (Jade Tree Records), Sean Brown (Swiz, Dag Nasty), and Mike McTernan (of Damnation AD, who for some reason friended me on Facebook even though I don't know him). Others were local scenesters or members of more obscure bands whose names never appeared on my radar, even though I was in the hardcore scene during part of this time (albeit in Indiana). Individuals give accounts of the history of The Safari Club, how shows started there, violence, epic performances, conflicts with the owner, and the venue's eventual closure.

In addition to the oral history, there are numerous, great, black-and-white photos of the bands that played there: Krakdown, Token Entry, Ignition, and many more. The photos are truly the highlight of the book, as they're given a large spread and capture the action and power of these shows.

There are problematic areas with *Live at The Safari Club*, however. The hardcore scene was, in the late '80s and early '90s, a predominantly white, male environment (even more than it is today). In almost all the pictures, I was shocked to see virtually no women and only a handful of people of color. I understand the club and

special. The lack of depth keeps *Live at The Safari Club* from living up to its full potential. —Kurt Morris (Rare Bird Books, 453 South Spring Str., Ste. 302, LA, CA 90013)

The Sarah Book

By Scott McClanahan, 233 pgs.

The Sarah Book is a horror novel for people who are more scared of marriage than zombies. Scott McClanahan loses his wife to a divorce that was her idea, then stares into the abyss and writes about it at length. Wait, no. It's a *novel*, narrated by a guy named Scott McClanahan. I know this because at one point the narrator has a conversation with a slowly dying dog. There's also a wedding gift holy Bible being set aflame on a whim and a fair amount of feces, plus suicides both imagined and botched.

If you've heard the band Reigning Sound, you know that they're not doing anything radically innovative. Yet, from five instrumental tracks from five bands, a fan would know which track was Reigning Sound's. McClanahan's prose is like that.

To choose a paragraph at semi-random: *I told her that I loved going inside after midnight and watching all of the people of the world shop. They were the people who the rest of the world didn't want and they were the ones that didn't belong anymore. They were the people with amputated arms and they were the people in wheelchairs and they were the people with face tattoos and scars. I was a scar too. I was a giant human scar. And then I felt serious and I said, "Walmart is more than a store. Walmart is a state of mind."*

As the composer of this novel, McClanahan fucks up only once (never mind how, you may not notice it), and I've never been so grateful to be pulled out of a story: *Oh, right, he's not The Seer, he's just a schmuck with an Underwood.*

The Sarah Book is an abyss book, but McClanahan isn't nihilistic. He spent many hours staring into this abyss so we only have to spend a few hours. Our old hope is burnt off like sugar cane and new hope is (if all goes well) harvested. —Jim Woster (Tyrant Books, ntyrant.com)





What obligation does a reviewer have to be nice? Straight up, this is one of the most grueling media experiences I've ever sat through.

—Bryan Static | *The Stolen Lyric*

Stolen Lyric, The: DVD

What obligation does a reviewer have to be nice? Straight up, this is one of the most grueling media experiences I've ever sat through. It's the movie length equivalent of somebody flipping through the radio and making little flip book drawings illustrating the plot of the lyrics.

Okay, I'm not explaining the premise well. This is an animated film, a jukebox musical of a sort. The dialogue is entirely made of clips from songs, with the lyrics laid out in subtitles so the audience can follow along at home. It tells the story of a band, The Merry, and their singer Rob, and before you know it you're watching a retelling of the Robin Hood legend as a rock opera about corporate suits and creative disputes.

Here's the thing though: this whole thing is awful. The animation is limited, but really what's more of a problem is the generic and amateurish character designs. The songs switch back and forth pretty

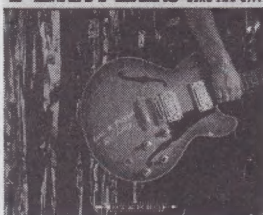
immediately. Questions asked by the chorus of one song are answered by verses from another. Sometimes a song you actually like is played and you kind of wish the movie would just play that song for a bit so you can forget you're watching a bad movie.

What this seems like to me is that somebody made an off-handed joke and then went way too far with it. An hour and forty-nine minutes of this presentation is a brutal chore. Dialogue goes back and forth, seemingly endlessly. Conversations that would last seconds in other films take minutes here. Some of it is bloated dialogue, but sometimes it's a sound clip being longer than it really deserves to be. It's not that I think it could be better, but that this whole idea seems like a misguided venture from the start. Also, every character is white. Why? —Bryan Static (chasepetergarrettson.com)



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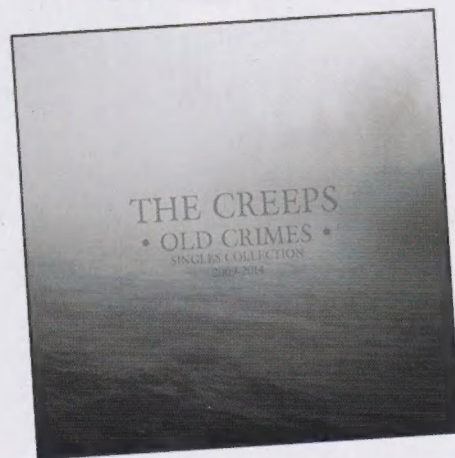
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